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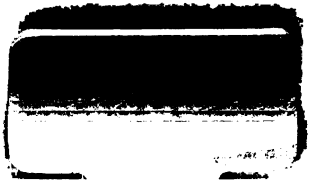

# ANCIENT AND MODERN MINSTRELSY.

# MINSTRELSY,

## ANCIENT AND MODERN;

WITH AN

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

AND

NOTES.

BY

WILLIAM MOTHERWELL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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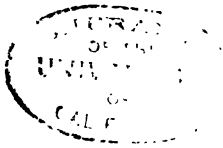

# INTRODUCTION.

As this compilation consists principally of Narrative Ballads, there occurring in it no compositions strictly called Songs, in the sense to which that term is now generally confined, except a few modern pieces, the slight observations with which it has been thought proper to introduce it are to be understood as referring exclusively to the Ancient Romantick and Historick Ballad of Scotland.*

Under the head of ROMANTICK, a phrase we are obliged to employ for lack of something more significant and precise, may be ranged a numerous and highly interesting body of short metrical tales, chiefly of a tragick complexion, which,

* "With us, songs of sentiment, expression, or even description, are properly termed SONGS, in contradistinction to mere narrative compositions, which we now denominate BALLADS. A similar idea is adopted by the Spaniards; and in France, every division almost of which the subject is capable has an appellation peculiar to it." See Ritson's *Historical Essay on National Song*, prefixed to *English Songs*. The term Ballad was at one period very indefinite; numberless instances of its loose and general application will readily suggest themselves to the reader of early poetry. Some of these are pointed out in the text and notes of the *History of English Poetry*, Vol. IV., pp. 249, &c., last edition. Those which had an unfortunate catastrophe were occasionally then, and still are, in our modern stall prints, called Tragedies.

though possessing all the features of real incident, and probably originating in fact, cannot now, after the lapse of many ages, be, with certainty, traced to any historical source, publick or private. With these may also be classed that description of ANCIENT SONG which treats of incredible achievements, and strange adventures by flood and field, — deals largely with the Marvellous in all its multiform aspects, — and occasionally pours a brief but intense glare of supernatural light over those dim and untravelled realms of Doubt and Dread, whose every nook the giant superstition of elder days has colonized with a prodigal profusion of mysterious and spiritual inhabitants. And in short, under this comprehensive head we must include every legend relating to person, place, thing, or occurrence, to establish whose existence it would be vain to seek for other evidence than that which popular tradition supplies.

The other class is much easier described. It embraces all those narrative songs which derive their origin from historical facts, whether of a publick or private nature. The subjects of these are national or personal conflicts, family feuds, publick or domestick transactions, personal adventure, or local incidents, which, in some shape or other, have fallen under the observation of contemporary and authentick annalists. In general, these compositions may be considered as coeval with the events which they commemorate; but, with this class, as with that which has been styled the Romantick ballad, it is not to be expected, that, in their progress to our day, they have undergone no modifications of form, and these very considerable, from that in which they were originally produced and promulgated among the people.

This interesting body of popular poetry, part of which, in point of antiquity, may fairly be esteemed equal, if not superior, to the most ancient of our written monuments, has owed its preservation principally to oral tradition. With the exception of a very few pieces, which, more through accident than design, appear to have found their way into old MSS., or early printed volumes, the ancient Ballad Poetry of Scotland must literally be gathered from the lips of

> "The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,
> Who use to chaunt it."

But fragile and capricious as the tenure may seem by which it has held its existence for centuries, it is worthy of remark how excellently well tradition serves as a substitute for more efficient and less mutable channels of communicating the things of past ages to posterity. In proof of this, it is only necessary to instance the well known ballad of "Edom o' Gordon," which is traditionally preserved in Scotland, and of which there is fortunately extant a copy in an English MS., apparently coeval with the date of the subject of the ballad. The title of this copy is "Captain Care." We owe its publication to the late Mr. Ritson, in whose "Ancient Songs" it will be found printed from a MS. in the Cottonian Library.* Between the text of the traditionary version and that of the MS., a slight inspection will satisfy us that the variations are neither very numerous nor very important. This is taking the MS. as the standard of the original text, although it can scarcely

*_Ancient Songs_, London, 1790, p. 137. Dr. Percy mentions that a fragment of it also occurs in his folio MS.

be considered as such, seeing it has been transcribed by an English clerk, who perhaps took it down from the imperfect recitation of some wandering Scottish minstrel, and thereafter altered it to suit his own ideas of poetical beauty.* Could, however, there be MS. copies of other of our ancient ballads recovered, it certainly would be a most desirable and valuable acquisition. If any such exist, and shall at any time hereafter be communicated to the world, it is confidently anticipated that they will establish the fact of tradition being, in all matters relative to popular poetry, a safe and almost unerring guide.

Language, which in the written literature of a country is ever varying, suffers no material changes nor corruptions among the lower and uneducated classes of society by whom it is spoken as their mother tongue. With them, primitive forms of speech, peculiar idiomatick expressions, and antique phrases are still in use, which we would look for in vain in the literature of the present day, or in its word-books, which are not professedly dedicated to the "Restitution of Decayed Intelligence." It is not, therefore, with the unlettered and the rude that oral song suffers vital and irremediable wrong. What they have received from their forefathers, they transmit in the same shape to their children; for, as the Pardonere in the "Canterbury Tales" has justly remarked, —

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*Ritson styles it "the undoubted original of the Scottish Ballad, and one of the few specimens now extant of the proper old English Ballad, as composed, not by a Grub Street author for the stalls of London, but — to be chaunted up and down the kingdom, by the wandering Minstrels of 'the North Countrie.'" But here the Critick has gratuitously assumed, that the name which appears at the end of it, as the copyist, is also that of the author.

"Lewd peple loven tales olde;
Swiche things can they wel report and holde."

Localities and persons may, it is true, be occasionally shifted to answer the meridian of the Reciter, and obsolete terms and epithets be laid aside for others more generally in use; but what may be called the facts of these compositions are never disturbed, nor are their individual or characteristick features ever lost. The tear and wear of three centuries will do less mischief to the text of an old ballad among the vulgar, than one short hour will effect, if in the possession of some sprightly and accomplished editor of the present day, who may choose to impose on himself the thankless and uncalled-for labour of piecing and patching up its imperfections, polishing its asperities, correcting its mistakes, embellishing its naked details, purging it of impurities, and of trimming it from top to toe with tailor-like fastidiousness and nicety, so as to be made fit for the press. For thus remodelling ancient Song, such complacent wights claim as their reward the merest trifle,—that of saddling antiquity with the sin of begetting, and the shame of maintaining, a few of the singularly beautiful and delicate growths of their own overproductive fancy. These pernicious and disingenuous practices breed a sickly loathing in the mind of every conscientious antiquary, and would, if not checked and exposed, in a short while, lay the broad axe to the root of every thing like authenticity in oral song.

The almost total absence of written monuments to support the claims of Scotland to an inheritance of Ancient National Minstrelsy enforces the stern necessity of not wantonly tampering with the fleeting and precarious memorials tradition has bequeathed to these latter times.

Hence, it has become of the first importance to collect these songs with scrupulous and unshrinking fidelity. If they are at all worth preserving, and no one who has an unsophisticated and manly taste can deny that they are so, it assuredly must be in the very garb in which they are remembered and known and can be proved to exist amongst us. It will not do to indulge in idle speculations as to what they once may have been, and to recast them in what we may fancy were their original moulds. We may regret that attention was not earlier bestowed on this neglected though interesting portion of national literature, but the only step we are warranted in taking, to remedy what Sir Thomas Browne has denominated "the supinity of elder times," is that of preventing its future dilapidation, by now carefully and accurately gathering what of its wreck we can yet find floating around us. The time may come when even these fragments will also be irretrievably borne beyond our reach.

Collections of these ballads, printed as they orally exist, will to those who succeed us prove a source of peculiar gratification, — a record of the most instructive and interesting kind. They convey to posterity that description of song which is peculiarly national and characteristick,—that body of poetry which has inwoven itself with the feelings and passions of the people, and which shadows forth, as it were, an actual embodiment of their Universal mind, and of its intellectual and moral tendencies. They communicate, too, another favour, which we would be glad had been conferred on us by any authority a century old, — that is, the means of ascertaining what in our day were deemed ancient compositions, and what of more recent or of contemporaneous date with ourselves.

Evident, however, as the importance is of thus collecting our traditionary poetry purely as it is to be found, it unfortunately happens that this has been too often slightingly and slovenly executed. With many of these ballads liberties of the most exceptionable and flagrant description have occasionally been taken by their respective editors, liberties as uncalled for as they are unpardonable in the eye of every rigid and honest critick. Some of these offences against truth and correct taste are of a very deep, others of a lighter shade of criminality; but be they what they may in magnitude, all are alike deserving of unmitigated condemnation.

It is, perhaps, unnecessary to mention, that, of every old traditionary ballad known, there exist what may be called different versions. In other words, the same story is told after a different fashion, in one district of the country, from what it is remembered in another. It therefore not unfrequently occurs, that no two copies, obtained in parts of the country distant from each other, will be found completely to tally in their texts; perhaps they may not have a single stanza which is mutual property, except certain commonplaces which seem an integrant portion of the original mechanism of all our ancient ballads, and the presence of which forms one of their most peculiar and distinctive characteristicks, as contrasted with the modern ballad. Both of these copies, however, narrate the same story. In that particular, their identity with each other cannot be disputed; but in many minute circumstances, as well as in the way by which the same catastrophe is brought out, sensible differences exist. By selecting the most beautiful and striking passages which present them-

selves in the one copy, and making these cohere as they best may with similar extracts detached from the other copy, the editor of oral poetry succeeds in producing from the conflicting texts of his various authorities a third version, more perfect and ornate than any individual one as it originally stood. This improved version may contain the quintessence, the poetick elements, of each copy consulted; but, in this general resemblance to all, it loses its particular affinity to any one. Its individuality entirely disappears; and those features by which each separate copy proved its authenticity, in the collated version, become faint and dubious, confused and undistinguishable. Such copies, however, are those which find their way readiest into our every-day compilations of such things, as well on account of their superior poetical merit, as of the comparative distinctness and fulness of their narrative; and to readers not accustomed to inquire into the nature of traditionary poetry they thus convey very inaccurate impressions of the state in which these compositions are actually extant among us.

This mode, then, of editing ancient ballads, by subjecting them to the process of refinement now described, though it be more conscientious and less liable to censure than another method also resorted to, is nevertheless highly objectionable, as effectually marring the venerable simplicity of early song, destroying in a great measure its characteristick peculiarities, and as being the means of introducing erroneous conceptions regarding our vernacular poetry which has been recovered from tradition.

All versions of a ballad, so preserved by oral transmission from one age to another, are entitled to be considered as of equal authenticity and coeval production, one with

the other, although among them wide and irreconcilable discrepancies exist. Indeed, the differences between some copies of the same ballad are so important, that their existence can be accounted for in no other way than by supposing these different versions the productions of so many distinct minstrels, each of whom obtained the story, which he versified, from a channel foreign to that accessible by his fellow-poets. Some of these diversities, it is true, may be attributable to the interpolations and corruptions acquired in the course of time, through the ignorance of reciters. Some are inaccurately committed to memory at first, and are thus in an incomplete form delivered. Others are in part forgotten, and the defects of the memory may be supplied by the invention of the reciter, or the limb of some other similar composition substituted for that which is lost. But allowing the utmost latitude for the many mutations incident to this species of literature, still it cannot account for all the variations we find in these copies, several of which ought to be elevated to the rank of distinct ballads, in place of being regarded as mere variations from one original text.

Under the pressure of such circumstances, then, it surely is the duty of the collector and editor of Traditionary ballads to avoid the perilous and frequently abortive task of uniting discordant and essentially incohesive texts, and to content himself with merely selecting that one of his copies which appears the most complete and least vitiated, — and to give it purely and simply as he obtained it, without hazarding any emendation whatsoever.

If this comparatively innocent mode of restoring our ancient ballads be obnoxious to censure, they are still more

culpable as editors, who, under no authority of written or recited copy, but merely to gratify their own insatiate rage for innovation and improvement, recklessly and injudiciously cut and carve as they list on these productions, and in some cases entirely rewrite them. Where the narrative is poor in incident, where it is wholly barren of imagery, there they most thickly plant their own bastard inventions, and strew the delicate blossoms of their own precious conceit. Where the ancient song breaks forth in the earnest, simple, and downright language of passion and of nature, there our ballad-renovator must dilute it to the slip-slop sentiment of his own day, and garnish it with the artificial brilliancies of his own style of writing; introducing throughout a current of feeling and a tissue of allusions (poetical, very poetical, we shall be charitable enough to suppose they are) wholly at issue with the cast of thought, the manners, and the modes of expression peculiar to the age which produced the original poem. And where the Ancient Minstrel, true in his delineations of society and of manners to the times in which he flourished, faithfully and vigorously sketches, *ad vivam*, nor hesitates, in the rush and tide of his song, to call a spade a spade, the Modern affects to shudder at the grossness and vulgarity of Antiquity, and diligently weaves his own gossamer web of sensuality around the nakedness of ancient simplicity, and then gloats over his seductive handywork with the complacency of the merest voluptuary. They who choose to stigmatize the Muse of Antiquity as being rather "high kilted" do no service either to Letters or to Morality by apparelling her in a "trailing gown," or giving her a "syde tail" of their own fashioning. In truth, it is by such impertinent and

pernicious labors that the obscenities of early writers become disgustingly obtruded on the publick eye. Had they been allowed to pass uncommented on, they would never have called a blush to the innocent cheek, or in the unaffectedly pure mind have wakened one unhallowed thought. For the curious and important knowledge, then, which enables us to detect and understand the gross witticisms and licentious allusions of our ancestors, we stand indebted to the tasteful emendations, the delicate and minute criticism, of these singularly sensitive and moral editors. But in their bitter wrath and in their lachrymose exclamations against the licentiousness of ancient song, and the times which produced and could relish such foul dainties, and in the pains they take to detect the presence of indelicate innuendo, though never so cunningly wrapped up in some dark allegory, and in the skill they show for its purification by kindly paraphrasing every objectionable passage, these well-meaning individuals not unfrequently manifest a lurking affection for their task, and a perfect acquaintance with its subject, seldom to be found in conjunction with that unspotted purity, and extraordinary refinement, and maiden-like delicacy which they profess.

There is yet another description of old song editors, whose mischievous and dishonest propensities cannot be too severely reprobated. It consists of those gentlemen who deem themselves fully better poets than ever earlier times produced; but who cannot persuade the publick to think so, or even prevail on it to read their compositions, till they have given them a slight sprinkling of olden phraseology, and stoutly maintained that they were genuine specimens of ancient song. Some trash, accounted as ancient, they

have, by sheer impudence, thus succeeded in forcing down the throat of a credulous and gaping publick; but sooner or later these paltry forgeries are laid bare, to the shame and confusion of the utterer. The attempt to poison the sources of history, and to confound truth by such fabrications, is despicable and unprincipled. It is much to be regretted, however, that some men of undeniable talents have occasionally lent themselves to such ignoble ends, and bartered an honest fame for a worthless and shadowy triumph. But with all their ingenuity in the manufacture of these antique gems, they can at best only gull the rabble, a poor and mean gratification, while on every hand they encounter the risque of being roughly handled by those who know the studies in which they traffick much better than themselves, and who by a solitary scratch of their pen can dissipate the idle fabrications thus painfully reared on falsehood and imposition, and expose their authors to the contempt and derision of that publick whose credulity and confidence they have abused.

When we look around us and find so voluminous a body of Vernacular poetry traditionally preserved among the patriotick children of an ancient and heroick race, for a period of time to which imagination can assign no definite limits, but whose origin seems as remote and involved in as much darkness as the early history of the people themselves, —a body of poetry, breathing at one time of "high erected thoughts seated in a heart of courtesie," and at another, overflowing with pathos and tenderest feeling; at one time swelling into all the pomp of chivalrick circumstance, and full of unmingled joy and triumph, at another moment narrowing itself into the intense interest of the deepest

tragedy, — a body of poetry as various in its subjects as those Armorican lays which

> " Ben yfounde of ferli thing,
> Sum bethe of wer and sum of wo,
> Sum of joie and mirthe also,
> And sum of trecherie and of gile,
> Of old auentours that fel while,
> And sum of bourdes and ribaudy,
> And many ther beth of fairy ;
> Of al thinges that men seth,
> Maist o love forsothe thai bethe," —

a series of compositions, terse and unlaboured, but supplying in their details satisfactory and striking illustrations of the manners, habits, feelings, superstitions, and prejudices of days deep hidden in the gloom of hoar antiquity, and whose peculiarities of style so completely distinguish them from those productions of more recent times which embrace a similar range of topicks ; — and when we find this curious and interesting species of national literature transmitted even to the present day, with a copiousness and fidelity almost rivalling the certainty and authenticity of written monuments, — we are naturally led to inquire, not only into the causes which have so linked it with the affections of each succeeding race, but our attention is also directed to the times which first cherished so remarkable a class of compositions, and to the poets by whom it was produced. Ample though such a field of inquiry be, it nevertheless is one wherein little progress can be made, with any degree of historical certainty ; and, in an investigation whose object is professed to be the elucidation of truth, it would be idle to substitute conjecture for facts.

To point out what truly are the most ancient of these compositions cannot be attempted with any success. Though tradition may faithfully transmit to us the narrative uninjured, and unshorn of any part of its circumstance, nay, even give the sentiments of the poet unaltered, and preserve the character of the piece precisely as at first pourtrayed, yet it alters the language so completely, that not a word may be preserved which originally was there. The phraseology of one age, as it becomes obsolete and strange, is in oral literature ever supplanted by equivalent terms, which are better understood, or are in daily use; and these again, in their turn, at some future period, yield to the same inexorable law of perpetual mutation. Thus the distinguishing features of different ages, so far as these are indicated by language, become so thoroughly blended, that to fix the antiquity of traditionary song by any evidence which its diction supplies is a hopeless, and, at best, an unsatisfactory endeavour.

"There are in Scotland," says Ritson, "many ballads, or legendary and romantick songs, composed in a singular style, and preserved by tradition among the country people. It must, however, be confessed, that none of these compositions bear satisfactory marks of the antiquity they pretend to, while the expressions or allusions occurring in some would seem to fix their origin to a very modern date."* The opinions of a writer of so much acuteness and information in poetick archaiology as Ritson, however hastily and inconsiderately delivered, are deserving of attention; but in this quotation it is to be observed that he

* Historical Essay prefixed to *Scottish Song*, London, 1794, p. lxxx.

y refers to the "expressions and allusions" interspersed ough the ballads he had an opportunity of studying, not o their general structure and to those commonplaces and curious burdens they frequently have, which serve as landmarks, and helps to the memory of the reciter, while they secure the stream of the narrative from being broken or interrupted by the innovations of time and the mutations of language. It is granted at once, that the "expressions and allusions" of these compositions fluctuate, and that frequently, but these changes never alter entirely the venerable aspect of the whole ballad. It is like repairing gradually the weather-worn face of an ancient cathedral, by the insertion here and there of a freshly hewn stone, as need may require. The outline of the building and the effect of the whole remain unchanged. Though the comparatively modern look of ballad phraseology, so far as dependent on certain allusions and expressions, is admitted to greater latitude than what is truly the fact, it is well known to those acquainted with the subject, that they still retain many *aureat termes*, struck in the mint of the olden time, amply sufficient to vouch for their remote extraction and gentle blood, even were there no other evidence at hand of a less questionable and suspicious kind. That evidence is contained in the bosom of the ballads themselves. They enjoy peculiar features, which not only distinguish them from the like sort of compositions produced in more recent times, but certain characteristicks which separate them from the written poetry of their own day, and identify them with each other as belonging to one body and family of National Minstrelsy. These features, it will be found, are common also to the early traditionary poetry

of the Scandinavian provinces of Europe; and constitute, in fact, the bounding line which exists between what is the Oral and what is the Written poetry of a people, or of that poetry which is equally intelligible to the unlettered as to the learned. We shall endeavour partially to sketch some of these distinctive and unalterable features of the ancient traditionary ballad of Scotland, although we feel that to do complete justice to the subject is neither in our power, nor is it compatible with the limits of this essay. Besides, there grows up an intuitive and auxiliary sense in all who are familiar with this study, which enables them at once, without any laboured process of induction or critical analysis, to discriminate between what is ancient and what is modern, or the imitation of the ancient; but this kind of intuitive perception cannot be communicated by words to another; and it is now merely mentioned to obviate any appearance of dogmatism, if, in the course of our observations, we should at any time call this old or that new, this genuine or that a forgery, without condescending to detail the grounds upon which such brief censures are founded.

The first thing that solicits our notice, in the Romantick ballad, is the almost uniform dramatick cast of its structure. The action of the piece commences at once. It does not, like the metrical romance, proceed, after craving the attention of lord and lady, and invoking the aid of the Virgin Mary, &c., to give a sketch of the parentage, education, and promising qualities of the doughty knight or gentle squire who is to figure in it. There is no pompous announcement of the exquisite enjoyment to be derived from the carping of such noble *gestes*. If such particulars are at all alluded to, they are noticed merely incidentally, and

dashed off perhaps in a single line. The characters and the destinies of those who form the subject of such tales are learned from their actions, not by the description of the poet. They generally open with some striking and natural picture, pregnant with life and motion. The story runs on in an arrowlike stream, with all the straightforwardness of unfeigned and earnest passion. There is no turning back to mend what has been said amiss, to render more clear that which may have been dimly expressed or slightly hinted; and there is no pause made to gather on the way beautiful images or appropriate illustrations. If these come naturally and unavoidably, as it were, good and well; but there is no loitering and winding about and about, as if unwilling to move on till these should suggest themselves. The charm of the composition lies in the story which it evolves. Strained and artificial feeling has no place in it, and rhetorical embellishments are equally unknown. Descriptions of natural scenery are never attempted, and sentiment is almost unheard of. Much is always left for imagination to fancy, and for the feelings of the auditors to supply, roused as they cannot fail to be by the scenick picture rapidly and distinctly traced before the mind's eye. In his narrative, the poet always appears to be acting in good faith with his audience. He does not sing to another what he discredits himself, nor does he appeal to other testimony in support of his statements. There is no reference to "as the boke tells," or "as in Romans I rede," for a corroboration of what he affirms. He always speaks as if the subject which he handles were one quite familiar to those whom he addresses, and touching which nothing but a perfectly honest and circumstantial statement of facts

could be relished. If fifteen stalworth foresters are slain by one stout knight, singlehanded, he never steps out of his way to prove the truth of such an achievement, by appealing to the exploits of some other notable manslayer. If a mermaid should, from a love of solitude and the picturesque, haunt some lone and lovely river, and there, while kembing her yellow locks, peradventure fascinate some unhappy wight, the poet never apologizes for the appearance of the waterwoman, by covertly insinuating how marvellous be the inhabitants of the ocean. And though an Elfin knight should unceremoniously adopt for his paramour some young lady whom he meets of a summer's evening, while rambling through the gay greenwood, and whose taste for the lovelinesses of nature is certainly more remarkable than her prudence, he never betrays any surprise at the circumstance, but treats it as a matter of every-day occurrence and historical notoriety. Should an unhappy ghost wander back to earth, the poet is perfectly master of the dialogue he holds with the maid he left behind him; nor is he at a loss accurately to describe how the fiend can, with a single kick of his cloven foot, sink a goodly bark, although reasonable doubts may well be entertained how such facts could have transpired, seeing none of its crew ever reached the land to sing of such an "unhappy voyage," more terrifick by a deal than that performed under the melancholy auspices of that "brisk and tall young man," hight "William Glen," who was bound for, but, alas! never returned from, "New Barbarie."

But be the subject of the narrative what it may, whether it be of real life fraught with an interest deeply tragical, or one of wild superstition and romantick incident, it will

ever be found clearly, succinctly, and impressively told. There is no unnecessary waste of words, — no redundancy of circumstances, nor artful involution of plot, — and no laying of colour above colour, to give a body and brilliancy to the picture. It stands out in simple and severe beauty, — a beauty arising, not from the loveliness of any one individual feature, but from the perfect harmony and wholeness subsisting among and sustaining all.

From the dramatick structure of these songs, we are naturally led to infer, that, when the singing or recitation of them was the business of Minstrels, they were prefaced with some account of the previous history of the several individuals whom they respectively commemorate; and that many minute circumstances elucidatory of them were detailed, not only for the purpose of interesting their hearers, but likewise to make the abrupt transitions occurring in some of these ballads more easy of apprehension to such as were strangers in the company. That this was the fact admits of little doubt. Traces of such a custom still remain in the Lowlands of Scotland, among those who have stores of these songs upon their memory. Reciters frequently, when any part of the narrative appears incomplete, supply the defect in prose. Where the ballad naturally terminates, they can tell what became of some inferior or subordinate character mentioned in it, whom the minstrel has passed over in silence, as interfering with the interest which should be exclusively concentrated around the principal personages. Some pieces, too, are prose and rhyme intermixed; the dialogue and those parts purely lyrical are in metre, while the narrative and descriptive portions are given in such humble prose as the reciter can furnish. An

instance of this kind Mr. Jamieson has given in "Illustrations of Northern Antiquities,"* and many similar cases could be produced, were it necessary. Thus, I have heard the ancient ballad of "Young Beichan and Susy Pye" dilated by a Story-teller into a tale of very remarkable dimensions, — a paragraph of prose and then a *screed* of rhyme alternately given. From this ballad I may give a short specimen, after the fashion of the venerable authority from whom I quote: — "Well, ye must know that in the Moor's Castle there was a Massymore, which is a dark, deep dungeon for keeping prisoners. It was twenty feet below the ground, and into this hole they closed poor Beichan. There he stood, night and day, up to his waist in puddle water; but night or day, it was all one to him, for no ae styme of light ever got in. So he lay there a lang and weary while, and, thinking on his heavy weird, he made a murnfu' sang to pass the time; — and this was the sang that he made, and grat when he sang it, for he never thought of ever escaping from the Massymore, or of seeing his ain country again:

"'My hounds they all run masterless,
My hawks they flee from tree to tree;
My youngest brother will heir my lands,
And fair England again I 'll never see.

"'Oh, were I free as I hae been,
And my ship swimming once more on sea,

* *Rosmer Half-man, or the Merman Rosmer*, p. 379. The legend there given still exists in the Nursery; but it has now, I believe, freed itself of all its metrical portions. The chance is but small that it will ever be recovered in a more perfect shape than what Mr. Jamieson's memory has enabled him to present it.

I 'd turn my face to fair England,
And sail no more to a strange countrie.'

Now the cruel Moor had a beautiful daughter, called Susy Pye, who was accustomed to take a walk every morning in her garden, and as she was walking ae day she heard the sough o' Beichan's Sang,* coming as it were from below the ground," &c. &c.

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* This popular ballad, which is apparently an English production, exists in many different shapes in Scotland. It is of unquestionable antiquity, and the young Beichan or Bekie, whose captivity, sufferings, and subsequent marriage with his deliverer it records, is no less a personage than the father of the celebrated Thomas à Becket. In *The Life of Thomas Becket*, quoted in Warton's *History*, Vol. I., p. 19, occurs this notice :

"Ther was Gilbert Thomas fadir, name the trewe man and gode,
He loved God and holi cherche setthe he witte onderstode ;
The cros to the holi cherche in his zouthe he nom,
..... myd on Rychard that was his mon to Jerlem come,
Ther hy dede, here pylgrimage in holi stedes faste,
So that among Sarazyns hy wer nom at laste."

When so *nomed*, it is probable the Saracen lady fell in love with him. Gilbert Becket must have been a distinguished individual in his day. He appears to have been Portgrave of London, a title now changed to that of Mayor. See *A Brief Chronicle of the Success of Times*, London, 1611, p. 574. That he was a person of great estate, Langtoft bears witness :

" Ther was his chancelere, Thomas of London born ;
Saynt Thomas fader I fynd hight Thomas (Gilbert) Beket;
In London of noble kynd and moste of alle was let,
A riche man he was, mot spend thre hundreth pound."

*Langtoft's Chronicle*, apud Hearne, p. 128. Hollingshed, speaking of the Saint, says :— "This Becket was borne in London, his father hight Gilbert, but his mother was a Syrian born, and by religion a Saracen." To the same effect Baker : — "The man was *Thomas Becket*, born in London ; his father, one *Gilbert Becket ;* his mother, an outlandish woman of the country of *Syria*." Fox, in his *Acts and Monuments*, Vol. I.,

In the same way, we are informed by Mr. Smith, that Reciters of Earse Poems frequently accompany them with a prose commentary;* a practice which also obtained in Denmark, and which is referred to by the compiler of the "Kæmpe Viser."† Some of the Ancient French Fabliaux

p. 267, London, 1641, affords another notice:—"And first here to omit the programe of him, and his mother named Rose, whom Polyd. Virgilius falsely nameth to be a Saracen, when indeed she came out of the parts bordering neere to Normandy," &c. Though she came from the quarter Fox says she came from, that did not prevent her from being a Saracen, a designation as general then as heathen is at the present day.

These notices will afford evidence sufficient to warrant us referring the ballad to the individual now pointed out. An inspection of some of the numerous legends touching the blessed Martyr, Saint Thomas of Canterbury, will probably supply many other interesting particulars, tending more completely to connect and identify them.

* Speaking of some liberties he was obliged to take in the translations of poems he had made from the Gaelic, the Rev. Mr. Smith, in his *Gaelic Antiquities*, Edinburgh, 1780, says:—"If any apology, however, be requisite for these freedoms, I can add that I have been, for the most part, guided in my conjectures, and even supplied in my additions, by the traditional tales, or *sgeulachds*, which always accompany and often explain the old Gaelic poems, and which often remain entire when the poems themselves are reduced to fragments." p. 129 of a *Dissertation on the Authenticity of Ossian's Poems.*

† This is still the practice in the Highlands of Scotland, in Ireland, the Isle of Man, and Wales; and, we believe, in every other country where such productions are preserved by oral tradition. "I have prefixed," says Mr Syv, in his preface to the *Kæmpe Viser*, "short notices to some of the ballads, and annexed such explanatory notes as seemed to be required, thus following in my publication the usage of those by whom these ditties have been handed down to us, who were accustomed first to sing the ballad, and, when they had finished, to relate the story, with all the circumstances connected with it, in prose. The explanation was called *Urskyring*, a word still in use in the Islandic language. This method of giving text and commentary tended to impress the tale upon the memory, and

appear likewise to have been partly intended for recitation and partly for being sung.*

That many of these ballads had certain frames in which they were set, and which, like the chorus of the Ancient Drama, discussed the motives of the characters, or entered more minutely into their history than was consistent with the limits and action of the metrical piece, derives corroboration from the fact, that a few of them still retain in their Initial Stanzas matter of an explanatory description. And, acting upon this principle, it would appear that the writers and printers of our modern ballads have, in the introductory verses of these ditties, or in the formidable titles with which they are prefixed, endeavoured to communicate to the reader that information which the Ancient Minstrel in all probability announced orally to his audience before he smote his harp with the hand of power.

There is another feature which the ancient ballads have in common with each other, and which constitutes a material distinction between them and those written purposely for the press. They are much more licentious and incorrect in their metres, according to the present standards of taste in these matters: the accent not unfrequently falls on syllables at variance with our present mode of pronunciation; and they have throughout the marks of a composition not meant for being committed to writing, but whose musick

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facilitated the traditionary preservation of these relics; and it is to such materials, handed down in this manner from one to another, that we are indebted for the historical labors of Adam of Bremen, Snorro Storleson Saxo, and Bishop Absalon." See foot note in *Introduction to Popular Ballads*, in *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, p. 239.

* Way's *Fabliaux*, Vol. I., p. 151. London, 1815.

formed an essential part of it, and from which it could not well be separated, without sensibly interfering with its unity and injuring its effect. And, indeed, it is pretty evident that many of them would require both the voice and instrument to be humoured, so as to conceal the many irregularities of measure and rhyme, or other accidental harshnesses, into which the poet had fallen. It is well observed by the father of this kind of literature, in his learned "Essay on the Ancient Minstrels," that, "in the more ancient ballads in that collection, the reader would observe a cast of style and measure very different from that of contemporary poets of a higher class, many phrases and idioms which the minstrels seem to have appropriated to themselves, and a very remarkable license of varying the accent of words at pleasure, in order to humour the flow of the verse, particularly in the rhymes; as,

Countrìe, harpèr, battèl, mornìng,
Ladìe, singèr, damsèl, livìng,

instead of coúntry, lády, hárper, sínger, &c. This liberty is but sparingly assumed by the classical poets of the same age, or even by such as professedly wrote for the press. For it is to be observed, that, so long as the minstrels subsisted, they seemed never to have designed their rhymes for literary publication, and probably never committed them to writing themselves; what copies are preserved of them were doubtless taken down from their lips. But as the old minstrels gradually wore out, a new race of ballad-writers succeeded, — an inferior sort of minor poets, who wrote narrative songs merely for the press. Instances of both may be found in the reign of Elizabeth. The

old minstrel ballads are in the northern dialect, abound with antique phrases, are extremely incorrect, and run into the utmost license of metre; they have also a romantick wildness, and are in the true spirit of chivalry. The other sort are written in exacter measure, have a low or subordinate correctness, sometimes bordering on the insipid, yet often well adapted to the pathetick; these are generally in the southern dialect, exhibit a more modern phraseology, and are commonly descriptive of more modern manners."* These observations, which refer to the English ballad, are equally applicable to the ancient and modern ballad of Scotland. For it need scarcely be mentioned that in their character both resemble each other so much, that it becomes impossible to say to which country a great number of them belong. Indeed, the most of our ballads appear to have been equally well known on the south as on the north of the Tweed; but in the Scottish ballads there never occurs any mention of "Harpers of the North Countrie"; which silence, taken in conjunction with the admission of the English ballads, may be twisted into something like a proof that Scotland was looked on as the accredited source of Minstrel song. We know her poets did not scruple to acknowledge their obligations to Chaucer as "flour of rethoris al," and even "Dan Lydgate" came in for a share of their approbation, along with "moral Gower"; and had her minstrels owed any thing to their brethren of the South, that debt, no doubt, would also have been as gratefully remembered.†

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* *Reliques of English Poetry.* 5th edition, London, 1812.

† In the introduction prefixed to the Romance of *Sir Tristrem*, the learned editor of that curious early poem has very ingeniously suggested that the southern provinces of Scotland, and

But one of the most striking, and, we may add, never varying features of these compositions, is their ever agreeing in describing certain actions in one uniform way, — their identity of language, epithet, and expression, in numerous scenes where the least resemblance of incident occurs. Instances of this fact are familiar to the student of old ballads as household words; but, as it is not every one who pays attention to these curious reliques of early poetry, it may be excusable to dwell a little on this singularity of their composition. It would seem that these commonplaces are so many ingenious devices, no doubt suggested by the wisdom and experience of many ages, whereby oral poetry is more firmly imprinted on the memory, more readily recalled to it, when partially obliterated, and, in the absence of letters, the only efficacious means of preserving and transmitting it to after times. Besides, it is in them that we not unfrequently recognize those epithets and allusions which carry the compositions to which they appertain to a remote age, — epithets and allusions to which the reciter of modern times does not and cannot well attach any distinct meaning, but which he nevertheless repeats as he got them; because he finds they occur in all such songs as uniformly as its burden perhaps of "Derry down, down, hey derry down." In no modern or com-

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northern shires of England, which for a long period belonged to the Scottish Crown, may be looked on as a probable source from which emanated much of the Romance of the Middle Ages, especially that class which commemorated the achievements of Arthur and his Knights. The arguments brought forward in support of this opinion are very specious, if not altogether convincing; but the theory itself is one which deserves to be further prosecuted than it has been by the eminent scholar who first started it.

paratively modern ballad do they ever present themselves, except in a few which may be considered as framed on the ancient models, or in those which immediately succeeded to the ancient ones, whose features, in part, they must have retained, in order to win their way to vulgar favour. For a sudden departure from those forms which use had rendered familiar, and age venerable, would not be tolerated by the body of the people; but a silent and imperceptible change might be gradually introduced, without exciting disgust, or openly warring with the overwhelming power of ancient prepossessions and long cherished associations. The snake does not cast off its slough at once, but slowly, and part by part, it peels off and wears away: nor did the ballad part all at once with the livery grave antiquity had clothed it in. Thus to very recent times, indeed, we can distinctly follow out the traces of the ancient ballad style of writing; and it is remarkable enough, that the compositions which so retain the characteristicks of an earlier body of song, though never so faintly apparent, are those which have become most extensively diffused over the country, and have been most perfectly committed to memory.

Shakspeare has sung, that "the course of true love never did run smooth," and many of our ancient ballads confirm the sad tale. In those ballads whose interest is derived from this fruitful source of human misery, we find a perfect uniformity of expression, in all cases where the death of the lovers is described. The very hour of this mournful event is pointed out with a painful precision that would defy the utmost chronological accuracy of the minutest obituarist; and when they are interred, as alway happens, the one in the chancel, and the other in the quire, the

miracle of the rose-bush, springing from the one grave, and growing and entwining itself with the briar, which shoots up with a fond eagerness from the other, till they reach the roof, where they shape themselves into a true-love knot, follows as a matter of course. This beautiful and pleasing fiction casts a soft and tender light over the moral history of that people whose popular poetry cherishes such amiable creations, and who in their hearts believe this emblematick triumph of imperishable constancy and true passion over death itself. The lovers, in these compositions, are ever found in "their lives lovely, and in their death undivided."

In cases where a message is to be run, a letter or token to be delivered, the same identity of expression, or but slightly varied, according to circumstances, obtains. The message itself is delivered word for word as it was communicated; and if a letter happens to be the medium of intelligence, we find it uniformly has the effect of exciting very opposite emotions in the individual to whom it is addressed. Like the fatal mandate delivered to Sir Patrick Spens, the first line provokes a "loud lauch," but, at the second, "the saut tear blinds his e'e"; and those ballads which go the length of describing the further effects produced generally mention that of the third line "a word he could not see."

Gentle dames, who choose to undergo a voluntary penance, as a mark of their sorrow for the loss of their paramours, cannot content themselves with a less period than seven years for enduring privations which would shock any sensitive lady of the present day. These privations consist in denying themselves the use of coal and candle, —

neglecting to comb their hair, to glove their hand, or put a shoe on their foot, or a smock on their back. After enduring these hardships, they not unfrequently have the satisfaction, on some chill moonshiny night, of meeting their lover's spirit, with whom they enjoy an edifying conversation, and to whom they then render back his plighted troth, in order that he may sleep at peace in his cold and narrow home. Indeed, there is not an action, nor an occurrence of any sort, but what has its appropriate phraseology; and to enumerate all these would, in effect, be to give the principal portion of all our ancient ballads. For in all cases where there is an identity of incident, of circumstance, of action, each ballad varies not from the established mode of clothing these in language. This simplicity of narrative, and undeviating recurrence of identical expressions in analogous cases, is one never failing mark of the antiquity of these songs, and their absence the best argument to the contrary. When a lover comes to his true-love's bower, he uniformly makes use of but one argument to gain admittance:

"O rise, O rise, Lady Margerie,
O rise and let me in;
For the rain rains on my yellow hair,
And the dew draps on my chin."

And much to the credit of the tender hearts that then held the world in gentle thrall, we seldom find that the shivering gallant was long excluded; for, as the minstrel has it,

"With her feet as white as sleet,
She strode her bower within;
And with her fingers lang and sma',
She loot sweet Willie in."

A combat, though never so toughly and tediously maintained, is very briefly handled by the poet. There is a sort of brachigraphy, or short-hand, used in the description, quite startling to the prosing of a modern versifier. The "nut-brown sword," which at this moment "hung low down by the gair" of the one duellist, is in the next sheathed "betwixt the short rib and the lang" of the other. When swords were at every one's thigh, it was of use to know how to wield them effectively. The Jews seem to have had a partiality for the same kind of thrust. In a note upon the following verses of "Childe Maurice," which may be quoted as an illustration of what has been said regarding the brevity of the Minstrel descriptions of duels, —

"But he pulled out a bright browne sword,
And dryed itt on the grasse,
And soe faste he smote at John Steward,
I wis he never rest.

"Then he pulled forth his bright browne sword,
And dryed itt on his sleeve,
And the first good stroke, John Steward stroke,
Childe Maurice head he did cleeve," —

an eminent antiquary remarks that "this singular act of cool, revengeful malignity occurs in almost every one of our tragick ballads. This I know not well how to account for, as it seems far from natural that a jealous rival, or injured husband, should, in the very heat and fury of passion, and when on the very point of committing an act of the most intemperate violence, draw out his sword, and fall a whetting it, as Shylock does his knife."* Nothing,

* *Popular Ballads and Songs*, p. 13.

however, appears, we think, more natural than what the ballad describes; for, though at the first onset the injured party may neither have occasion, nor in his fury take time, to put a keen edge on his weapon, yet, if opposed by a master of fence, he may, before commencing a second bout, and while gathering his wind, reasonably well amuse himself in the interval by wiping his dripping blade,—it will bite all the deeper for it. And it may be remarked that the expressions of *wiping on the sleeve*, *drying on the grass*, and *slaiting owre the strae*, always occur in such ballads as indicate a dubious and protracted and somewhat equal combat; and I take it these expressions were meant to convey that idea to the mind, as opposed to cases in which an individual has been overpowered by superior numbers, or assassinated unawares.

This uniformity of phraseology in describing incidents of a similar nature, which pervades all our ancient ballads, might appear to argue a poverty both of expression and invention in these Minstrel Poets; but if the compositions were narratives of real facts, produced on the spur of the occasion, as in most cases we have ventured to suppose them to be, the use of such commonplaces becomes abundantly obvious. They not only assisted the memory in an eminent degree, but served as a kind of groundwork, on which the poem could be raised. With such commonplaces indelibly fixed in his memory, the minstrel could with ease to himself, and with the rapidity of extemporaneous delivery, rapidly model any event which came under his cognizance into song. They were like inns or baiting-places on a journey, from one to the other of which he could speedily transport himself. They were the general

outlines of every class of human incident and suffering then appropriated to song, and could be fitted easily to receive individual interest as circumstances might require, and that without any painful stretch of fancy or invention. Indeed, the original production of these commonplaces betokens no slender ingenuity on the part of these song-inditers. They were like a commodious garment that could be wrapped expeditiously round every subject of whatever nature or dimensions. Something of the same sort, though in a less marked degree, may be discovered in the construction of the longer metrical Romances, — all arguing that the composition of these pieces had been reduced to a certain system, and subjected to a peculiar mechanism, necessarily arising out of the circumstances under which they were produced, and the incessant craving of the popular taste for novel incident and fresh excitement. Besides these peculiar forms of expression, established epithets, and variety of commonplaces, another mean of assisting the memory, and preserving the character of the melody unchanged, was adopted. This consisted in the burthens attached to the songs, many of which certainly in our day appear totally unmeaning and extravagant. But it is not unlikely that these "stiff burdouns," though abundantly curious and incomprehensible to us, had a significance, and were a key to a whole family of associations and feelings, of which we can form little or no conception.* It

* If we are to credit Jones (see his *Welsh Bards*, p. 128), the common burden of "Hey derry down" signified "Let us hye to the Green Oak," and was the burden of our Old Song of the Druids, sung by the Bards inviting the people to their religious assemblies in the groves.

is probable they may have been fragments of still more ancient songs, to which the Ramsays and Cunninghams of these times had fitted new words for the nonce. This seems to be the fact with regard to the Danish ballads; and it is known that it was a common practice with the old French Poets to make a particular line of an old song the *Refrain* or burden of a new.*

In the popular poetry of the Northern nations the same remarkable features are all to be found. Not only these, but the very subjects of some of the ballads appear to be the same with those of our ancient ballads. Of this interesting fact many instances will be found in those pieces of traditionary poetry which Mr. Jamieson has translated from the "Kæmpe Viser." In the work where most of these translations appear, that ingenious writer observes, "There may be remarked in all the Scottish and Danish traditionary ballads a frequent and almost unvaried recurrence of certain terms, epithets, metaphors, and phrases which have obtained general currency, and seem peculiarly appropriated to this kind of composition. The same ideas, actions, and circumstances are almost uniformly expressed in the same form of words; and whole lines, and even stanzas, are so hackneyed among the reciters of popular ditties, that it is impossible to give them their due appropriation, and to say to which they originally belonged." To these peculiarities in what may be styled the mechanism of the ancient ballad, and which appear to be thus common to the traditionary poetry of other countries, may be attributed the purity and

* *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities.* Burney's *History of Musick*, Vol. II. Pinkerton's *Tragick Ballads.*

integrity with which a great body of it has been transmitted to the present day, notwithstanding the many causes which, for centuries, have been vigorously at work to corrupt and annihilate it. "Time, which antiquates antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these minor monuments."

The amiable Platonist, Dr. Henry More, hath sung in his philosophical poem, that

"The soul's most proper food is Verity";

and we are inclined to think that the main charm by which these compositions have grafted themselves so deeply in the vulgar mind, and twined themselves around all the nobler and finer sympathies of our nature, may be attributable to their possessing this quality in a high degree, — to their being held and reputed as faithful records of indubitable facts.

The greater bulk of the ancient pieces with which we are acquainted, neither in their names, nor in the incidents which they relate, contain any thing romantick or extravagant. Their heroines have homely enough sounding names, seldom indulging in a larger variety than what this slender catalogue of Lady Margaret, Lady Marjorie, or fair Janet, affords. The same remark applies with equal justice to the lords and knights who enact the parts of lovers or persecutors; Sweet William, Lord Thomas, Earl Richard or John, are the favourite appellations. The subjects of which they treat are evidently pictures drawn from a state of society comparatively rude, in which the distinctions of rank were few, but deeply marked. The personages, however, who figure in them, move in the higher classes, which is another proof of their antiquity, and places them anterior

to those circumstances that overthrew the institutions of chivalry and sapped the foundations of feudal aristocracy, thereby introducing the mixed aspect and form of society now known in this country. In general, they present a series of domestick Tragedies, which, without any violation of truth, may be considered as painted from actual life and every-day occurrences. The Minstrel had no inducement to feign a narrative calculated to awaken the dormant sensibilities of his auditors, when the unsophisticated material was ready made to his hand, and that of a description, too, much more pregnant with interest and variety than invention could supply. Indeed, this appetite in the vulgar mind for true incident is in our time remarkably apparent in the avidity with which the miserable rhymes, hawked about the streets, and palmed off as the poetick effusions of notorious criminals under sentence of death, are perused, and the facility with which easy melodies are fitted to them for the purpose of singing.* And it is a received proverb in

* The fables of the Ancients, that Swans become musical immediately before death, would appear from this to have been not without meaning. "Macpherson's Rant, or the Last Words of *James Macpherson*, Murderer, — to its own proper Tune," which was printed on a broadside about 1701, is certainly the most extraordinary and energetick composition that ever contemplation of a gibbet inspired. In Herd's collection scarcely more than one half of it is published; consequently several of its most powerful lines must remain unknown to the general reader, till some one possessed of the broadside copy takes the trouble of reprinting it. Burns thought the subject worthy of his pen, and wrote some lines entitled *Macpherson's Lament;* but these convey an inadequate idea of the rude strength, the savage fierceness and vindictive spirit, which are characteristick of the original, and little or none of that fearless scorn of Death and Hell which every now and then bursts forth in its closing verses.

our language, no doubt derived from the times when Minstrelsy was in its meridian glory, that there is no *Geste* like a real *Geste;* in other words, that there is no tale like a true tale.

While there is an ample store of ballads which appear to be referable to real incident and matter of fact, those which record what Gawin Douglas has characterized as

> "Wilde auentouris monstouris and quent affrayis
> Of uncouth dangeris"

are comparatively few. But whether this class of songs be, as we have imagined them to be, no more than metrical relations of certain passages occurring at different times in the great drama of human life, or whether they be the veriest creations of the poet and the fabulist, it matters little; for whichever way the fact stands, this much is certain, that their popularity has arisen from, and their permanency among us been owing in no partial degree to, the received and general impression that has obtained among the people of their original derivation from historical sources. This, independently of the other attractions which many of them possess, as simple and effective pieces of poetick composition, has seated them firmly in the hearts and affections of the people, and secured them for centuries from being swept away by the more elaborated and artificial strains which recent and succeeding times have accumulated.

It is well known by all who have personally undergone the pleasant drudgery of gathering our traditionary song, that the old people who recite these legends attach to them the most unqualified and implicit belief. To this circumstance may be ascribed the feeling and pathos with which

they are occasionally chaunted, — the audible 'sorrow' that comes of deep and honest sympathy with the fates and fortunes of our fellow-kind. In the spirit, too, with which such communications are made, in the same spirit must they be received and listened to. The audacious skeptick, who, in the plenitude of his shallow worldly wisdom, dared to question their being matter of incontrovertible fact, I may state for the information of those who may hereafter choose to amuse themselves in the quest of olden song, would eventually find the lips of every venerable sybil in the land most effectually sealed to his future inquiries.* Reciters, moreover, frequently assign special localities to the ancient ballads, which they gladly indicate to the inquisitive, and to these they appeal as a triumphant refutation of every objection which learned skepticism may urge to the accuracy of the facts thus traditionally preserved. The wood or the water, the tower or the town, the castle or the kirk, the bridge or the bower, nay, even the good oak-tree to which some doughty hero of elder times hath leaned his back and resolutely made good his quarrel against tremendous odds, can all be singled out and shown to be in perfect accordance with the history as delivered in the ballad. It must be admitted, however, that these localities are very accommodating, and that the evidence which they afford is entitled to little or no weight. For a ballad, when it has become a favourite of

* From no discourteous motive, but from sheer ignorance of this important article of belief, I have, unfortunately for myself, once or twice notably affronted certain aged virgins, by impertinent dubitations touching the veracity of their songs; an offence which bitter experience will teach me to avoid repeating, as it has, long ere this, made me rue the day of its commission.

the people in any particular district, is soon fitted with localities drawn from the immediate neighbourhood. This is more particularly the case with any one which represents a class of similar compositions. Thus, "Tomalin," which may be looked on as the representative of the whole class of ballads relative to *Faerye*, and which is claimed by the Editor of the "Border Minstrelsy" as a Selkirkshire ballad, in which district it is stated to be completely located, will be found clothed with every particular of local habitation and name in many other counties far distant from that which has sought to attach it as exclusive property.

It has been usual to ascribe the composition of this large body of traditionary poetry to the Minstrels, an order of professional poets and musicians, whose history, from various causes, is necessarily somewhat obscure, and which, till the time of Dr. Percy, had been wholly neglected. The wide diffusion of our ballads over every part of the country, both north and south of the Tweed, and the various sets which are extant of these, would (were there no intrinsick evidence afforded by these compositions themselves) be amply corroborative and confirmatory of such an opinion. The minstrels were, as one of their number informs us, accustomed to

> "walken fer and wyde,
> Her and ther in every syde,
> In mony a diverse londe,"

with harp in hand, and thereto singing or reciting, not only the *Romance of price*, but those more succinct and veracious narratives which have reached to our time in the form of ballads.

Although at first it was only in the halls of

" Magnificat crownit kings in Majeste,
Princes, duces, and marquis curious,
Erlis, barronis, and knytis chevelrous,
And gentillmen of he genolege,
As scutiferais and squieris full courtlye," *

that was heard their " oft singing and sawis of solace," and where

" Ermy deidis in auld dayis done befoir,
Croniculis, gestis, stories, and mich moir,"

were pleasantly discoursed of, — even then, some small parcel of the " lofty strain" would be remembered by the humbler retainers of the " Lordingis and ladeis honorabil," for whose ear it was more peculiarly adapted, and through them would gradually descend and be communicated to all the inferior ramifications of feudal society.

But when the age of chivalry passed away, and the Minstrel profession declined in importance, or gradually assimilated itself to other callings, and at length sunk into neglect and opprobrium, through the influence of causes too numerous and foreign from our purpose to trace, the lower ranks of the people became, as is always the case, the rightful and undisputed heirs of the cast-off tastes and literature of the higher orders. It was not to be supposed, however, that all at once they could either keenly relish or appreciate the more refined and elaborated productions of the Minstrel muse. In fact, they could not understand them. At least, we have the authority of Robert de Brunne for hazarding this conjecture, who mentions expressly that he undertook his translation

* *Cokelby's Sow*, apud Laing's *Reliques of Early Scottish Poetry.*

" for the luf of symple men,
That strange Inglis can not ken,"

and that he made it

" noght for no disours,
Ne for no seggers no harpours " ;

whereas, had he indulged himself in the " quainte Inglis " of the Minstrels, who addressed their productions " for Pride and Nobleye,"

" fele men that it herde
Suld not witte howe that it ferde " ;

and he concludes his introduction by stating that

" men besoght me, many a tyme,
To turne it bot in *light* ryme ;
Thai sayd if I in *strange* it turne,
To here it manyon suld skurne ;
For it ere names fulle selcouthe
That ere not vsed now in *mouthe ;*
And therfore for the *comonalte,*
That blythely wild listen to me,
On light lange I it began,
For luf of the lewed man."

Neither could the " comonalte " spare so much leisure as sufficed for the recitation of pieces distinguished for prolixity, nor could their circumstances enable them to remunerate the Disour, Segger, or Harpour for such prolonged enjoyments.* These gentlemen, as appears by some of the

* A groat was the customary fee for a fit of Minstrel mirth, as appears by Dr. Percy's researches, and a considerable sum in those days he has proved it to be. If it was an xviii. penny groat, it could command not a few luxuries, as the following curious extract shews: — " In the yeir of God 1533, Sir Wal-

monuments they have left behind them, being noways shy of distinctly announcing that they should be recompensed for their labours with "giftes bothe reche and good," such as

> "Hors robis and reche ryng,
> Gold, silver, and othyr thyng,
> To mende with her mode," *

and indeed every courteous knight who figures in their annals, they take especial care to specify, derived no slender modicum of his renown from the unbounded munificence and liberality he shewed to them. A simpler intellectual fare was therefore required for the palate of a rude audience, and this the Historical Ballad supplied. Their stubborn sensibilities could only be excited by narratives of real incident, suffering or adventure, distinctly, plainly, and artlessly told. With confessedly fictitious woes, or fabulous deeds, however brilliantly detailed, they could not sympathize, — and a long period elapsed after the Romance had ceased to be heard in the halls of the great, before it found its way to the fireside of the hind and the artisan. When it did find its way, however, it lived long in their remembrance, — traces of which can be discovered as late as the middle of last century. †

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ter Coupar, chaplaine in Edinburghe, gate a pynte of vyne, a laiffe of 36 vnce vaight, a peck of aite meill, a pynte of aill, a scheipe head, ane penny candell, and a faire woman, for ane xviii. penny grotte." Marjoreybanks's *Annals of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1814, p. 5.

* *Romance of Sir Cleges.*

† Sir Walter Scott, in his article entitled "Romance," in the late supplement to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, mentions, that, "about fifty or sixty years since, a person acquired the nickname of *Rosewal and Lilian* from singing that romance about the streets of Edinburgh, which is probably the very last

Portions of these Romances, it is probable, were from time to time detached, and presented in the shape of ballads to the people. It is certain, if we are to believe Thomas Hearne, that metrical chronicles, like "Robert of Gloucester," and "Peter Langtoft," were thus disjointed, and sung or recited as ballads to the people;* and there is nothing improbable in supposing that the voluminous "Cronykil of Andro of Wintown" was in Scotland broken up, and doled forth to the "comonalte" in the same compendious form. The tales of "Skail Gillenderson," and that of the "Three Weird Sisters," which are mentioned in the "Complaynt of Scotland," and which are now supposed to be entirely lost, I have little hesitation in my own mind when I say that the outlines of both these tales are to be found

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instance of the proper minstrel craft." This fact is also referred to by Dr. Leyden, in his introduction to the *Complaynt of Scotland*. See also Mr. Laing's interesting volume entitled *Early Metrical Tales*, Edinburgh, 1826. Of the existence of MSS. Romances in Scotland at an early period, and of the esteem in which they were held, the research of the learned editor of the last mentioned work presents us with this valuable notice: — "Sir James Douglas of Dalkeith, the ancestor of the Earls of Morton, in his Last Will and Testament, dated in the year 1390, bequeaths to his son and heir 'Omnes Libros meos tam STATUTORUM Regni Scocie quam ROMANCIE.'" Preface, p. iv.

* "For notwithstanding most people then (as well as they are now) were very desirous of hearing the Acts of their famous Ancestours related, yet much the greater part were not of ability to get compleat Copies of this Book, and for that reason were contented with Transcripts of some particular Stories out of it, which for recreation (a thing aimed at by Robert of Brunne) they used to recite, and very often to sing by way of Ballads. Which method we ought not to wonder at, since our more ancient Ballads were nothing but such Rhythmical Historical Accounts, done by Persons of note for Learning, who proposed Truth in their Relations; and such Relations were stiled Ancient Gests, which word Gests was opposed to the French

in Wintown.* That the chronicle was originally meant for being sung there can be little doubt, from the allusions interspersed through it. The expression, "That was the matere of our Gle," which frequently occurs, warrants us in drawing this inference, and other expressions of a similar import, also occurring in the work, confirm it.

"In the repetition of an unskilful reciter," says Dr. Leyden, in his introduction to the "Complaynt of Scotland," "the metrical romance or fabliau seems often to have degenerated in a popular story; and it is a curious fact, that the subjects of some of the popular stories

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Romance, a Word it seems that was apply'd to whatever History was compiled in French Rhythms." Preface to *Langtoft's Chronicle*, p. xxxvii.

* See Book VI., cap. XVIII., and Book VII., cap. VII. Dr. Leyden thinks it probable that *Skail Gillenderson* may be a corruption of *Scald* Gillenderson, and therefore concludes it to be "a Scandic Story," — *Introduction to Complaynt of Scotland*, p. 270, — an opinion which might not have been impugned, had he at the same time pointed out any Northern Saga or ballad which bore that title. Had any such existed, it is likely that Mr. Jamieson would have noticed the fact ere this time. But I suspect there is a misprint in the *Complaynt*, and that, in place of "Skail Gillenderson the King's Son of Skellye," we should read *Skail Gillenders sune, — the king sune 'l skail ye;* being the commencement or some prominent passage in the original ballad, or whatever it was. Or "Skail Gillenders sune" may be one distinct tale, and "The King's Son of Skellye" may be another. The Songs mentioned in the *Complaynt* were first noticed by Dr. Mackenzie, in his *Lives of Scottish Writers*, Vol. III., p. 44, and a misprint in the title of one of these posed antiquaries not a little. "Coũ thou me the raschis grene," was transformed by him into "couthume the rashis grene" and this corruption stood till the right reading was restored by Ritson in the Dissertation prefixed to *Ancient Songs*, p. liii. Taking Leyden's edition of the *Complaynt* to be a perfectly accurate reprint of the original, it is not impossible that either some error in the punctuation or some other of a more formidable character may have crept into the orig-

which I have heard repeated in Scotland do not differ essentially from those of some of the ancient Norman fabliaux presented to the public in an elegant form by Le Grand. Thus, when I first perused the fabliau of the "Poor Scholar," the "Three Thieves," and the "Sexton of Cluni," I was surprised to recognize the popular stories which I have often heard repeated in infancy, and which I had often repeated myself, when the song or the tale recited by turns amused the tedious evenings of winter. From this circumstance, I am inclined to think that many

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inal itself. The story of Gillendrys, as told by Wintown, is this:

"A. D. 1158. Quhen the Kyng Malcolme [IV.] come agayne,
Of hys Legis mad hym a Trayne:
A Mayster-man cald Feretawche,
Wyth *Gyllandrys* Ergemawche,
And othir Mayster-men thare fyve
Agayne the Kyng than ras belywe.
For caws that he past til Twlows,
Agayne hym thai ware all irows:
For-thi thai set thame hym to ta
In-til Perth, or than hym sla.
Bot the *Kyng* rycht manlyly
*Swne skalyd* all that cumpany,
And tuk and slwe."

This insurrection, which arose among the Scottish nobility through their jealousy of the friendly footing existing between their Sovereign and Henry II. of England, appears to have been of considerable magnitude. It is noticed by Fordun, — see *Scotichronicon*, Lib. VIII., cap. IV., — who only gives the name, however, of *Ferchard comes de Strathern*. *Gillendrys* at that period was no uncommon name in Scotland; for in another part of his chronicle Wintown has recorded Maldowny *mak Gillandrys* as a bishop of St. Andrews. On looking to the poems from the Maitland MSS. edited by the late Mr. Pinkerton, I find he has suggested the very passage above quoted, as referring to the tale of Skail Gillenderson, and it is some satisfaction to be supported by an authority so respectable in a matter so dubious.

of the Scottish popular stories may have been common to the Norman French. Whether these tales be derived immediately from the French during their long uninterrupted intercourse with the Scottish nation, or whether both nations borrowed them from the Celtic, may admit of some doubt." As to the original source from which these stories have flowed, the reader need scarcely be told how utterly useless all conjecture becomes; the same stories, or but slightly varied, we find everywhere, and in every language, the popular vehicles of amusement or instruction to the people. Countries far separated from each other, and having no affinity of language, still preserve this identity in their popular tales. And where these have disappeared in a measure from the literature of a people, we may rest assured that their vestiges can still be traced in the legends of the Nursery.

"Many of the wild romantick ballads which are still common in the Lowlands of Scotland," continues the same writer, "have the appearance of episodes, which, in the progress of traditional recitation, have been detached from the romances of which they originally formed a part. Several of the ancient songs in the 'Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,' and in the 'Minstrelsy of the Border,' are of this description. The popular songs which relate to dragons and monsters authenticate their legitimate derivation from the tales of chivalry. Another class of popular songs, which describe the unnatural involvement of the passion of Love, may with propriety be referred to the ancient romances. Such are 'Lizie Wan,' 'The Bonny Hind,' 'The Broom Blooms Bonny, the Broom Blooms Fair.'"*

* *Hynd Horne*, *Tamlane*, *Kempion*, and *Fair Annie* are all, it

It becomes, however, a question, whether these ballads, thus referable to Ancient Romance, were themselves not the first elements of the very compositions from which they are now hypothetically derived. Instead of being episodes or fragments of the Romance, detached from the parent stock, in the course of traditional recitation, or an abstract of it, made in later times for behoof of the lower classes, the Ballad may have been the seedling from which the other derived its being. Of the remote beginnings of our Metrical Romances we positively know nothing; but we have the evidence of history to vouch for the attachment which the different people among whom Romance subsequently flourished had for the ancient songs which celebrated the actions of their ancestors. In the progress of time, these heroick narratives would increase, and, as one country became, either by alliance or war, more intimate with the history and traditions of its neighbours, its native song would embrace a wider range of subjects, and be in some measure blended with that of the people to which it stood most immediately connected, or with which, at some future period, it came to be politically incorporated. Thus, long ere the first of the Metrical Narratives known by the general term of Romances was heard of, a body of historick poesye was extant, not only embracing the exploits of particular heroes, but commemorating national triumphs. Men, who

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is believed, which can satisfactorily establish their derivation from the source now pointed out; but it is probable, that, were our knowledge on this subject more extended, many other ballads current among us could be traced to a like origin. As for the other class of popular songs referred to by Dr. Leyden, it appears to me more probable that Romance has been indebted to them rather than the reverse.

in their publick character have occupied a prominent place in their country's annals, naturally attract a proportionate degree of interest and curiosity towards their domestick or private history. Hence another series of historick songs is produced; for whatever powerfully interests human affection, or rouses human passion, as naturally breaks forth into song, as the stream flows, or the sun shines.

Materials of this varied and interesting description had time accumulated in every country where Romance, at an after period, formed the only intellectual solace of its martial inhabitants. As society advanced in refinement, and the rudeness and simplicity of earlier ages partially disappeared, the Historick Ballad, like the butterfly bursting the crust of its chrysalis state, and expanding itself in winged pride under the gladdening and creative influence of warmer suns and more genial skies, became speedily transmuted into the Romance of Chivalry. In the history of poetry, the transition from fact to fiction is easy as it is instantaneous. Like Coleridge's night, "at one stride comes the dark." One fertile source of the fabulous arises from the metaphors and figures of an imaginative age, receiving in ignorant, dull, and prosaick times a literal interpretation. Again; the exaggerations natural to an excited state of feeling — the desperate struggle of the soul wrestling with its own grand but dim conceptions, and endeavouring to give them a substantive shape, so as to suit the apprehensions of others, ere language has fully unfolded its capabilities, and become rich in abstract terms and logical distinctions — are the means of introducing no slender portion of fable into the early annals of a country, and of giving to its traditionary literature the warmth and brilliancy of Ro-

mantick embellishment. Even those tales of monstrous worms, dragons, and hippogriffs, — of giants measuring full fifteen feet in length, or of dwarfs scarce three span long, — with all which the Romance of the Middle Ages teems, can, in some measure, be traced to this source. In truth, the most extravagant creations in this vein have had some prototype, in fact or in nature, at one time; however difficult it may now be to recognize and detect the minute and meagre original, under the superincumbent load of splendid and fanciful decoration with which the genius and taste of many subsequent ages have successively beautified and disguised it. All facts, in the lapse of time, become fables; and the converse of the proposition, that all fables have been originally facts, is equally true.

That the Romance of Chivalry was the legitimate descendant of the Heroick Ballad appears sufficiently obvious from this single fact, that the taste for enjoying, and of course producing, these fictitious narratives, broke out in each country of Europe, as it successively arrived at that point of refinement which required mental excitement to cherish and keep in activity its warlike and chivalrous propensities. The heroes whom the Minstrels chose for their versifications were uniformly selected from those worthies of antiquity whose names and famous actions the traditions and ancient songs of the land still kept in remembrance. These again were occasionally supplanted by others who flourished in more recent times, and even contemporary warriors at last came in for their share of adulation, and of that glory with which the Muse can arrest and halo an otherwise fleeting name. But the origin of Romantick Fiction, instead of being thus sought for in the tradi-

tions of each particular land where it obtained, and being looked on as the natural intellectual growth of that land at a certain stage of its progress towards refinement and the courtesies of life, and as step by step advancing from the simple narrative ballad to the more elaborate composition, which embraced a variety of such narratives, and at length bourgeoned and branched out into all those complicated and fictitious adventures and singular poetic creations for which the Metrical Romance is distinguished, has, with much learning and ingenuity, been by different writers traced to a variety of opposite and contradictory sources. One hath assigned it a Scandinavian, another an Arabian, a third an Armorican origin, while others have claimed this distinction for Normandy and Provence. To examine into the merit of these respective hypotheses is foreign from our present purpose, but to ascribe to any one of them the sole origin of that stupendous fabrick of poetical invention which delighted the Middle Ages would be as foolish as the simple shepherd's thought, who, after tracing with affectionate fondness the windings of his slender native stream till he found it terminate in the ocean sea, deemed the limitless expanse of waters before him no other than the accumulations of the small well-spring, which, in the solitude of the far uplands, he knew full well, did, morning and evening, hum its tiny song, and gush with the gladness of new-born life, in a silver-like thread, down the dark hill-side.

Each of the systems, it is true, does in part satisfactorily account for this species of poetick compositions, but it would require them all blended together to obviate every objection which applies to each singly. Supposing, how-

ever, that the Metrical Romance is, as already mentioned, but the elongation of the Heroick Ballad, produced gradually in the course of years by the means slightly hinted above, all the difficulties and contradictions, into which an adherence to any one of the theories now enumerated would eventually involve such an inquiry, can never occur. It is while in its *transition* state, that the Metrical Romance of one country readily receives and incorporates into itself the traditions and fictions of another, and while it receives, it likewise imparts a portion of its own peculiar character to the Romance of the other. Thus the spirit of the whole becomes alike, and the more the intercourse is which subsists politically between different nations, the closer becomes the resemblance in their Romance; and the rate of exchange, so far as fact and fable, traditionary lore and poetical fictions, are concerned, stands pretty much *at par*.

In Scotland, the feudal system, and the institutions of chivalry, subsisted longer in force than in the southern portion of the island; and for this reason I am inclined to think that the Minstrels occupied a reputable footing in society longer than their brethren of the South. In 1471, they are classed along with "Knychtis and Herraldis," and with such as could "spend a hwndretht pundis worthe of landis rent."* Blind Harry, the only one of their

* "Item, it is statut and ordanit in this present parlyament, that considering the gret powerte of the Realme, the gret expenss and cost mad apon the brynging of silkis in the Realme, that tharfor na man sal weir silkis in tyme cummyng, in gown, doublate, and clokis, except knychtis, menstrallis, and herraldis, without that the werar of the samyn may spend a hwndretht

number whose works we can refer to, appears to have, in his person, come up to the notion we are led to form of the life and business of the ancient Minstrel. He chaunted his heroick strains before the princes and the nobles of the land.* From the long poem which he has left, relative to Sir William Wallace, we have an instance of the diligence with which the professed Minstrel gathered the detached traditionary songs of the people, and wove them into a continuous poem. Even so late as the time of King James the Sixth, in which a number of sapient acts are passed, and among others, some fierce enactments against the whole class of "maisterfull ydill beggaris, sornaris, fwlis, bairdis," &c., there is an express provision in favour of the Minstrels of great lords and the Minstrels of towns.† As the profession of a Minstrel

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pundis wortht of landis rent, vnder the payn of amerciament to the king of x. lib. alss oft as thai ar fundyn and eschetin of the samyn, to be gevyn to the herraldis or menstrallis, except the clathis that ar mad befor this parlyament," &c. *Acta Parliamentorum Jacobi III.* A. D. 1471.

* "Qui, historiarum recitatione coram principibus, victum et vestitum, quo dignus erat, nactus est." Major, Lib. IV., cap. XV.

† "And that it may be knawin quhat maner of personis ar meanit tobe ydill and strang beggaris and vagaboundis, and worthy of the pvnisement befoir specifiit, It is declarit, that all ydill personis, gaying about in ony cuntre of this realme, vsing subtile, crafty, and vnlauchfull playis, As iuglerie, fast and lowiss, and sic vtheris, The ydill people calling thame selffis egiptianis, Or ony vther that fenzeis thame to haue knawlege in physnomie, palmestre, or vtheris abused sciencis, quhairby thay perswade the people that thay can tell thair weardis deathis and fortunes and sic vther fantasticall ymaginationis, And all personis being haill and stark in body and abill to wirk, Allegeing to haue bene hereit in the sowthland brint in the lait troubles about edinburgh and leith, Or allegeing

authorized a wandering life, and insured a welcome wheresoever he should sojourn, it was one of the first to be assumed by that numerous class of idlers and broken men who, in a state undergoing vital changes in its political features, like Scotland at the time we speak of, would rather starve than be compelled to work, and at all times would prefer *sorning* on their neighbours, than being forced to do either. But if, as has been shown, till a recent period, there were favourable conditions in our legislative enactments for the Minstrel, the Bards,* who, too,

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thame tobe benneist for slauchter or vtheris wickit deidis, and vtheris nowther having land nor maister, nor vsing ony lauchfull marchandice, craft, or occupatioun, quhairby to win thair levingis, and can gif na rekning how thay lauchfullie get thair leving, And all menstrallis, sangstaris, and taill tellaris not avowit in speciall seruice be sum of the lordis of parliament or greit barronis, or be the heid burrowis and citeis, for thair commoun menstrallis, All commoun laboureris being personis abill in body leving ydillie and fleing laubour, All countirfaittaris of licencis to beg, Or vsing of the same, knawing thame tobe countirfaitit, All vagaboundis, scollaris of the vniuersiteis of sanctandrois, glasgow, and abirdene, not licencit be the rector and Dene of facultie of the vniuersitie to ask almous, All schipmen and marinaris, Allegeing thame selffis tobe schip brokin, without thay haue testimoniallis as is heireftir declarit, Salbe takin, adiugeit, demed, and pvneist as strang beggaris and vagaboundis." *Acta Parl. Jacobi VI.* A. D. 1574.

* "To our fathers' time and ours something remained, and still does, of this ancient order. And they are called by others, and by themselves, jockies, who go about begging, and use still to recite the sluggornes of most of the true ancient sirnames of Scotland, from old experience and observation. Some of them I have discoursed with, and found to have reason and discretion. One of them told me there were not now twelve of them in the whole isle; but he remembered when they abounded so as at one time he was one of five that usuallie met at St. Andrews." Martine's *Reliquiæ Divi Andreæ*, p. 3. *Jockey* appears to be derived from *Joculator*.

overran the country, and doubtless sang in the Gaelic tongue of Fin Mak Coul, and Gow Mac-Morne, and the whole descendants, direct and collateral, of that gigantick race, were treated with no such gentleness. On them the rigour and the pains of law fell with undiscriminating violence. A vagabond, thief, counterfeit, limmer, and bard were synonymous. Dunbar, in his "Flyting," styles Kennedy, a native of Carrick, "a brybour Bard." And it is a curious fact, that in the West of Scotland, Renfrewshire at least, the phrase *bardy*, a word of common occurrence, is used to signify impudent, rude, uncivil, forward, or quarrelsome.

Though legends relating to the Fingalian Cyclus of Heroes, and fables of King Arthur, and the chivalry of the Table Round, were one time popular in the Lowlands of Scotland, it is not a little remarkable that not the slightest vestige of them is now to be found in our ancient ballads.* I believe, however, that in some nursery tales traces of Celtick traditions can be discerned, and among the rhymes of children, used in their games, there are yet a few scraps which refer to King Arthur.†

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* "It is said that Fynmakcoule, the sonne of Coelus Scottisman, was in thir dayes; ane man of huge statoure, of xvii. cubits of hicht. He was ane gret huntar, and richt terribil, for his huge quantite, to the pepill: of quhome ar mony vulgar fabillis amang us, nocht unlike to thir fabillis that ar rehersit of King Arthure. And becaus his dedis is nocht authorist be autentik authoris, I will rehers na thing thair of." *Croniklis of Scotland*, the Sevent buke, chap. 18.

† "It is written that Arthure tuke great delectatioun in wersling of strang kempis, havand them in sic familiarite, that quhen he usit to dine, or tuke consultatioun in his weris, he gart thaim sit down with him in maner of ane round crown, that nane of thum suld be preferrit till otheris in dignite: for quhilk-

The ballad poetry of England and Scotland has been at one time so much alike, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to discriminate between what truly may be considered as the native production of the one or the other. To lay down any general law for ascertaining their respective rights of property, in literature of this description, is therefore impracticable. If England exhibits ancient manuscripts in which these ballads are contained, Scotland proves immemorial possession of them by oral transmission even to the present times. The claims of either party in this way appear pretty equally balanced.

Ritson, with that scrupulous skepticism for which his writings are generally remarkable, reluctantly admits that the following may be considered as Minstrel Ballads peculiar to England, viz.

1. The Battle of Chevy Chace.
2. The Battle of Otterbourne.
3. Little Musgrave and Lady Bernard.
4. Lord Thomas and Fair Eleanor.
5. Fair Margaret and Sweet William.
6. John Dory.
7. John Armstrong.
8. Captain Care.

"Being all of this kind," he adds, "known to exist"; for Mr. Ritson long pertinaciously denied the existence of the MS. from which Dr. Percy gave a number of the ballads

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is his seit was callit The Round Tabil. And thoucht his vaillyeant dedis wer worthy to have memorie, yet the vulgare fabillis quhilkis ar fenyeit of the samin lies violat thair fame, and makis thaim to have the less credence." *Cron. of Scotland*, the Nint buke, chap. 11.

published in the "Reliques." This list is but scanty, and little would either country have to boast of its early Minstrelsy, were its limits to be thus circumscribed by the mere asseveration of learned petulance and constitutional irritability. Of the eight ballads selected by Ritson as those "which, according to the rules laid down by Dr. Percy, may," as the critick observes, "be supposed to have been written and sung to the harp," six are traditionally preserved in Scotland, namely, the second, third, fourth, fifth, seventh, and eighth, and these with such variations as may entitle them to be looked on as the composition of a native Minstrel, not adopted songs. At all events, it shows the early intercommunity of song which existed between the countries, and the perfect identity of their popular poetry.

In the writings of the early English Dramatists, especially Shakspeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, we find numberless snatches of ancient ditties, introduced with an effect singularly felicitous, and allusions made to others, of whose existence we have now no other evidence. Most of them appear to have been also common to Scotland, and some of them certainly the production of her Minstrels.*

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* In *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, old Merrythought gives this verse, evidently a portion of a Scottish Song, both in subject and style; perhaps it may have belonged to some edition of the popular ballad of *The Laird of Logie:*

"She cares not for her mammy, nor
She cares not for her daddy, for
She is, she is, she is,
My lord of Lowgave's lassie."

The same blythe old fellow sings this stanza, which is to be found in some sets of the *Douglas Tragedy*, and in an unedited

In the reign of Elizabeth and James the Sixth, the Minstrel ballads of England began to be superseded in vulgar affection by a more ambitious class of similar compositions, written purposely for the press, by sundry indefatigable small poets of that prolifick day. The chief balladmongers of said period have been enumerated by Percy and Ritson. These caterers for popular taste seem to have considered but few of the ancient ballads worthy of renovation; and such as they did adopt were subjected to a fiery ordeal, which tamed their spirit, and left them with passing little of their original character. In speaking of a ballad, styled "The Doleful Death of Queen Jane, Wife to King Henry the Eighth," the editor of the collection where it appears, after mentioning that it was written in the reign of King James the First, observes that "that age so abounded with Poets, that we owe almost half of our Historical Ballads to it. Not that I believe they were first written at that Time; but the language of 'em being grown very obsolete, it was then refin'd, and the songs put into a new and more fashionable Dress. We are told by some criticks, that we are not so much beholden to the Number of Poets

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ballad I have heard recited called *Lord Thomas and Lady Margaret:*

"He set her on a milk-white steed,
And himself upon a grey;
He never turned his face again,
But he bore her quite away."

In *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, the Jailer's daughter sings part of a song, beginning, "The George alowe came from the south," regarding which commentators are silent, though I suspect it is the same song as one that is still known in Scotland by the name of *The Turkish Galley*, or *The Lowlands Low*.

who lived in that time, as to the number of Scots King James brought over with him; for our English Bards, fearing the nation would be overrun with Scotchmen, and then the memory of our worthies would perish, took care to revive all their Historical Ballads, and to disperse 'em amongst the people, not only to transmit their actions to posterity, but that the latest ages might see we did not owe our origin to the Scots." * This, if true, was very patriotick; but it is a thousand pities that those who took the trouble of white-washing the face of the time-sullied song of their native land had not more taste and judgment than what appears to have fallen to their share.

The favourite ballads were again collected into penny Garlands, in the titles of which their several editors seem to have tortured their ingenuity to some purpose.† These were frequently reprinted, and numbers of them, as well as single ballads, have been preserved in various collections. ‡

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* *A Collection of Old Ballads.* London, 1726. Vol. II., p. 118, 2d edition.

† *Percy's Reliques. Ritson's Ancient Songs*, &c.

‡ The famous Pepysian collection of old ballads, at Magdalen College, Cambridge, in five volumes, contains two apparently of Scottish extraction, viz. *The Elfin Knight*, which will be printed in this volume, and *The Lord of Lorn*, a worthless piece, as we are informed by Ritson. This collection may be found to contain more, were it examined by one skilled in the traditionary poetry of Scotland. Another collection, matchless of its kind, and perhaps exceeding that above noticed, is the far renowned Roxburghe collection, in three volumes, and abounding in many curious pieces of early Scottish poetry. It has the ballad of *Glenlivat*. A collection formed by the late Mr. Baynes, the friend of Ritson, in two volumes, is in the possession of Mr. Douce. Another collection of these things is in the British, and a fifth in the Ashmolean Museum. The editor regrets that he knows none of the collections now enumerated by personal inspection; but he believes that they contain few, very few, of

Till about 1712, ballads were, both in England and Scotland, printed on broadsides; since then they have pretty generally assumed the book form, which has continued the established mode of printing them; though from this practice there are frequent deviations. Ballads intended for being sung through the streets are still printed on one side of a narrow slip of paper; but those meant for being vended through the country by the worshipful fraternity of Flying Stationers have the honour of being made up into the book form.

The historick ballads of Scotland will not detain us long. Indeed, we possess but very few ancient monuments of this description of song. That at one time there existed a large body of heroick ditties, commemorative of national struggles and personal adventure, is unquestionable; but with the events which produced them, these warlike strains have passed into oblivion. In the pages of our early chronicles incidental allusions to these songs sometimes occur, but these notices are ever meagre and unsatisfactory; for it would seem that the "learned clerks" who compiled our

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what are the real ancient minstrel ballads of the country, and this opinion he forms from the great quantity of sad trash to be found in works whose materials are professedly derived from these sources. Scotland is unfortunately destitute of any similar collections. In the Advocates' Library, there is one consisting of about seventy pieces, all apparently of English growth, with the exception of one entitled, *The West Country Wager, or the Merry Broomfield*, a traditionary fragment of which Herd gave under the title of *I'll wager, I'll wager, I'll wager with you*, and which was afterwards published in a more complete form in the *Border Minstrelsy*, with the title of *The Broomfield Hill*. The song is popular still, and is often to be met with. In a catalogue of John Stevenson, Bookseller, Edinburgh, 1827, occurs a very curious collection of ballads and other pieces, mostly printed at Edinburgh, between 1689 and 1700.

authentick annals had little sympathy with the tastes of the "lewd vulgare," and seldom deigned to pretermit the labours of their own cunning pen for the sake of recording a popular rhyme. For these "short and simple annals" they had no relish, and it is questioned if modern historians are one whit more condescending.

The first allusion we find to Historical Songs relates to William, brother of King Achaius, one of the douceperes of Charlemagne, and who "conqueist," says Bellenden, "be his manheid and prowes, sic fame, that he was callit 'The Knicht but Reproche,' in all his weris, and got sic riches and landis, that he was gretumly renownit amang the princiss of France." "It is he," says Hume of Godscroft, "who is named in songs made of him, Scottish Gilmore." This the historian of the Douglasses gives on the authority of Major, whose words, however, as Mr. Finlay has observed, hardly admit of such a construction; they are, "Qui a nostratibus vulgariter Scotisgilmor vocatur." "May we presume, then," continues the same writer, "that, since the expression *vulgariter vocatur*, when applied to Gilmore, appeared to Hume's mind equivalent to *is named in songs*, these songs must have been still current in the days of the later historian,* or can we only conclude that at the time when Major wrote (about 1508) he was still a popular hero in Scotland?" The ingenious doubt, thus started, we cannot resolve; but this only is certain, that, whatever these songs were, or whensoever current, every vestige of them hath disappeared from our traditionary poetry.

* Bellenden's *Boece*, 10 Buke, cap. 4. *History of the Family of Douglas*. Major, Lib. II., cap. XIII. Finlay's *Ballads*, Vol. I., p. 12.

"Robin Hood and his fallow litill John" were popular with the Minstrels of Scotland, as they were with those of England. Our early Poets and Historians never tire of alluding to songs current in their own times, relative to these waithmen and their merry men. Even to this day there are fragments of songs regarding them traditionally extant in Scotland, which have not yet found their way into any printed collection of ballads commemorative of these celebrated outlaws. Were they carefully gathered, they would form an interesting addition to Ritson's "Robin Hood." In that collection, the ballad of "Robin Hood and the Beggar" is evidently the production of a Scottish Minstrel, pretty early stall copies of which were printed both at Aberdeen and Glasgow.

What Coleridge has characteristically styled "The grand old Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens" has undoubtedly a right to be classed among our Historick Songs. It has been referred to the times of Alexander the Third; and in the prefix thereto in this collection, the opinion hitherto entertained of its alluding to the bringing home of the Maiden of Norway has been challenged, and in place thereof it has been suggested that the song commemorates the disastrous shipwreck which awaited the return of a number of those noblemen who formed the retinue of Margaret when she was married to Erick of Norway. Her marriage is thus noticed by Wintown:

"A. D. 1281. The nest yhere foluand,
The Kyngis Dowchtyr of Scotland
This Alysandrys the thryd, that fayre May
Wyth the Kyng wes weddyt of Norway:
Margret scho wes callyd be name,
Comendyt fayre, and of gud fame.

Of August that yhere the twelft day
Hyr wayage scho tuk on til Norway.
In the Assumptyowne of oure Lady
Scho thare ressawyd wes honorably.
Suppos, of caws as hyr behowyd,
Swa fra hyr Kyn scho wes removyd,
Hyr Hart stad in gret hewynes;
Wyth honowre yheit scho ressawyd wes."

Between the time occupied in the voyage, as given by the Historian, and that described in the ballad, there is a remarkable coincidence:

"They hoysed their sails on Monenday morn,
Wi' a' the speed they may;
They hae landed in Noroway,
Upon a Wodensday."

There being only a day of difference in their reckoning; for the Assumption of our Lady falls on the 15th of August. Even the days of the week do not disagree; for I find, from a laborious calculation, that the 12th of August, 1281, was a Monday.

The variations in recited copies of the ballad are exceedingly numerous, and some are of considerable beauty. In Mr. Buchan's "Gleanings of Ancient Ballads," p. 196, four stanzas are given additional to the set printed in the "Border Minstrelsy." In another copy of the ballad, I have found a mermaid introduced, at the commencement of the storm, in these words:

"Upstarted the mermaid by the ship,
Wi' a glass and a kame in her hand,
Says,—Reek about, reek about, my merry men,
Ye are not very far from land.

Ye lie, ye lie, ye bonny mermaid,
Sae loud as I hear you lie,
For sin I hae seen your face this night,
The land I will never see."

And another verse describes the magnificence of the bark Sir Patrick commanded, in a style similar to what occurs in romance:

"Their ship it was a goodly ship,
Its topmast was of gowd,
And at ilka tack o' needle wark,
A silver bell it jowed."

In another version of the ballad, there is a bold recklessness displayed on the part of the hero, which does not appear in the other copies yet printed. Sir Patrick and his crew, like some reckless pirates mentioned in Dampier's Voyage, meet their fate with a hurra, and a brimming cup in their hand:

"Drink, O drink, my merrie men all,
Drink of the beer and wine O,
For gin Wodensday by twall o' the clock,
We 'll all be in our lang hame O.
And aye they sat, and aye they drank,
They drank o' the beer and wine O,
And gin Wodensday by twall o' the clock,
They were a' in their lang hame O."

This same version has also a very emphatick stanza, descriptive of the violence of the storm:

"Come down, come down, my bonny boy,
I think ye tarry lang O,
For the jaw gangs in at my coat neck,
And rins out at my richt hand O."

And concludes with some lines of uncommon beauty, for they limit our sympathy to individual suffering and domestick grief:

"Young Patrick's lady sits at hame,
Sewing her silken seam O,
And aye as she look'd at the saut sea waves,
I' m feared he 'll ne'er return O.
Young Patrick's lady sits at hame,
Rocking her eldest son O,
And aye as she looked at the saut sea waves,
I 'm feared he 'll ne'er come hame O."

The desolating period which succeeded the death of Alexander, till the decisive battle of Bannockburn, must have been peculiarly fertile in heroick song. Wallace, the idol of the people, and the gallant asserter of his country's independence, became the nucleus of a large series of such narratives. Wintown records one of his earliest adventures, which still lives in the shape of a ballad. And he closes his notice of him by alluding to the "Gret Gestis" to which his illustrious actions had given rise:

"Of his gud Dedis and Manhad
Gret Gestis, I hard say, ar made;
Bot sa mony, I trow noucht,
As he in-til hys dayis wroucht.
Quha all hys Dedis of prys wald dyte,
Hym worthyd a gret Buk to wryte;
And all thai to wryte in here
I want bathe Wyt and gud Laysere."

The industry of Henry the Minstrel has done justice to the history of the Patriot, and it is believed that in his heroick poem will be found incorporated all the detached songs,

founded on real or fabulous incident, which were living on the breath of tradition, regarding the hero, at the time Henry lived. The disappearance of these detached songs can be ascribed to no other cause than the extreme popularity which the work of Henry has acquired. I have heard it as a by-word, in some parts of Stirlingshire, that a collier's library consists but of four books, — The Confession of Faith, the Bible, a bunch of Ballads, and Sir William Wallace : — the first for the gudewife, the second for the gudeman, the third for their daughter, and the last for the son ; a selection indicative of no mean taste in these grim moldwarps of humanity.

No ballads relative to the Bruce and his chivalry exist, the celebrity of Barbour's historick poem having, in the course of time, wholly swept their memory away. That one, who, in his own person and fortunes, realized the most perfect picture we have of a "Knight adventurous," and who seems himself to have had a very lively relish for the compositions of the Minstrel muse,* should fail being commemorated in song is inconsistent with probability. We know that a herald in a solemn feast, being desired by Edward of Caernarvon to say what three knights then living were most approved in arms, unhesitatingly named Bruce as one of the number. The minstrel and the herald were at that period, oftentimes, one and the same profession. When Barbour wrote, ballads relative to this period appear

* Barbour gives an interesting account of him, in one instance comforting his followers by reading to them portions of the *Romance of Ferambrace*, and on another occasion of being accustomed to tell them

"Auld storys off men that war
Set intill hard assayis ser."

to have been common; for the poet, in speaking of certain "Thre worthi poyntis of wer," omits the particulars of the "Thred which fell into Esdaill," being a victory gained by "Schyr Jhone the Sowls" over "Schyr Androw Hardclay," for this reason:

> "I will not reherss the maner,
> For quhasa liks thai may her
> Young wemen, quhen thai will play,
> Syng it amang thaim ilk day."

"The monkishe rymes, truffes, and roundes," made alternately by the Scottish or English, as either side prevailed, and of which some specimens are preserved in the chronicles of the latter, do not properly belong to the class of Narrative Ballads. These rhymes, it may be stated, are written in what is called the "ryme Cowee," and which appears to have borne a marked resemblance to that description of metrical abuse styled "Flyting" by our Scottish Makers, of which we have some notable examples in the poetick encounters of Dunbar and Kennedy, and Montgomery and Hume. The lines preserved in Fabyan's Chronicle, on the Battle of Bannockburn, which "The Scottis, enflamyd with pryde, in derysyon of Englysshe men, made," — and which he informs us were "after many dayes sungyn, in daunces, in carolis of ye maydens and mynstrellys of Scotlande, to the reproofe and dysdayne of Englysshe men, with dyuerse other," — are, I believe, all that ever existed of that Song. They are of a piece with the "scornful rhyme" which the Scots made when the English were repulsed at the siege of Berwick, but which rhyme, unhappily for its authors, besides being repaid in similar coin, on

a future occasion, drew down the unrelenting vengeance of the personage whom it had satirized.

There is a ballad of an early date, referred to by Hume of Godscroft, in his history of the family of Douglas, in these words: — "The Lord of Liddesdale, being at his pastyme hunting in Attrick Forest, is beset by *William*, Earle of Douglas, and such as he had ordained for that purpose, and there assailed, wounded, and slain, beside Galsewood, in the year 1353, upon a jealousie that the Earle had conceived of him with his Lady, as the report goeth; for so sayes the old song:

"'The Countesse of Douglas, out of her bowre she came,
And loudly there that she did call;
It is for the Lord of Liddesdale
That I let all these teares downe fall.'"*

* "The song also declareth, how shee did write her love letters to Liddesdale, to disswade him from that hunting. It tells, likewise, the manner of the taking of his men, and his owne killing at Galsewood, and how hee was carried the first night to Linden Kirk, a mile from Selkirk, and was buried within the abbacie of Melrosse." *A Generall History of Scotland*, by David Hume of Godscroft, London, 1657, p. 77. It is somewhat singular that this fragment has not yet been appropriated by Mr. A. Cunningham, and other menders and patchers of ancient song, as a fit subject on which to whet their lively and ingenious wits. The historian has furnished them with materials ample enough for the nonce, and their temerity has led them certainly, on other occasions, to achieve more daring outrages on antiquity, with less to guide them in their tilt against truth, taste, candour, and common honesty. The fanciful and eloquent writer whom I have chanced here to name, I am aware, expresses his doubts regarding the antiquity of the few lines Godscroft has preserved; so has he relative to the Elegiack Song on the death of Alexander the Third, preserved in *Wyntownis Cronykil*; — but his opinions on these matters are little to be regarded, for his ideas regarding what is old and what is new in our vernacular poetry seem very unsettled.

Of this ballad the Editor of the "Minstrelsy of the Border" mentions that a few fragments still survive, and that these occur in that work; but after a minute search for them, I suspect they have been omitted by some oversight, as they are not now to be found there.

The same writer supposes that this stanza, which also occurs in Godscroft's History, and which refers to the infamous murder of William, sixth Earle of Douglas, in the castle of Edinburgh, by the hands of his Sovereign, in 1440, is part of a ballad which had been composed on that event:

"Edinburgh Castle, Town and Toure,
God grant thou sink for sinne!
And that even for the black dinoure
Erl Douglas gat therein."

A tragedy of this description, in which personages of the highest eminence were actors, and which was so repugnant to humanity, and inconsistent with honour, would, no doubt, soon be reduced into song; but if it did, with the exception above quoted, there exists no other vestige.

In the list of "storeis and taylis" given in the "Complaynt of Scotland," there is mention made of the "tail of Sir valtir the bald leslye," which Dr. Leyden supposes may have been a Romance of the crusades, now lost. If so, it is one of those which must have supplied a reasonable portion of ballad narratives to the vulgar, among whom it would seem the name of Lesley was not unknown, when Verstegan wrote, and Dr. Mackenzie compiled his cumbrous volumes of Scottish Biography.*

* Mr. Finlay seeks to connect with this a tradition pre-

Mr. Pinkerton, in his "Select Scottish Ballads," has, in the preliminary dissertation with which the second volume is garnished, this foot note. "The loss of 'Chevy Chace' might be compensated to Scotland by the recovery of many tragick pieces of no inferior merit, were means used by those who have opportunities for that purpose. *Bertram the Archer*, the Robin Hood of Scotland, is now hardly known to have existed, though he was celebrated

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served by Verstegan, in his *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence*, London, 1634, p. 292. "A combat being once fought in *Scotland*, betweene a Gentleman of the family of the *Lesleyes*, and a Knight of *Hungary*, wherein the *Scottish* Gentleman was victor, in memory thereof, and of the place where it happened, these ensuing verses doe in *Scotland* yet remaine:

"'*Betweene the lesse ley and the mare,*
*He slew the Knight, and left him thare.*'"

Mackenzie, in his life of John Lesley, Bishop of Ross, gives a different account of this tradition. After mentioning that the family of Lesley sprung from Bartholemy Lesly, a Hungarian gentleman, who accompanied Queen Margaret from Hungary to England, and from thence to Scotland, where he married one of her maids of honour, about 1067, by whom he had a son named Malcolm; which Malcolm, having been appointed Governor of Edinburgh Castle, defended the same so valiantly, that the King first knighted him, and then made him Governor thereof for life, in reward for his services; — "But this was not all," says our historian, "for he desired him to ride a Day's Journey North from Dumfermling, and wherever he bated his horse he would give him a Mile round. The First place he halted at was *Fechil*, now called Leslie in *Fife;* the Second was at *Innerlepad* in *Angus;* the Third was at Feskie in the Merns; then at *Cushnie* in Mar; and Lastly at *Leslie* in Garioch, where his Horse gave over. Upon his return, the King asked him, Where he had left his Horse? He answered, *At the Lesseley beside the Mair.* The King, noticing how well that agreed with his name, said to him,

"'*Lord* Lesley *shalt thou be,*
*And thy Heirs after thee.*'" Vol. II., p. 502.

in many a heroick ditty. The only stanza known to the Editor is given, as it closes with a pretty thought. Bertram, being surrounded by his enemies, addresses his weapon in this manner:

"'My trusty bow of the tough yew,
That I in London bought,
And silken strings, if ye prove true,
That my true love has wrought.'"

If Songs relative to this Bertram ever existed, it is to be regretted that they have now passed into irretrievable oblivion. The stanza given by Mr. P., it is but right to mention, appears a genuine remain of some old song, and no fabrication of his own.*

The battle of Otterbourne, fought in August, 1388, has not passed unsung; and as the glory inclined to the Scottish in that conflict, it is but natural to conceive that it would become a favourite theme with their Minstrels. We find an allusion made to it in the "Complaynt of Scotland," and, indeed, two lines of the ballad itself quoted. Traditionary, though imperfect, versions of it are still current among the peasantry, one of which is given by Herd, and

* It unfortunately happens that one does not well know when Mr. P. is in sober earnest, and when merely indulging in innocent jesting, while writing of ancient ballads. The *many heroick ditties* in which this Archer, it seems, was celebrated, have certainly never been heard of in the present day, nor has the reading, inquiry, or observation of the present writer enabled him to detect any allusion to his dedis in history or tradition. It may not be improbable, however, that the fine fragment of *Barthram's Dirge*, preserved in the *Border Minstrelsy*, may refer to this individual. There is, in the fragment of *The Laird of Muirhead*, allusion also made to a person of this name. — Since writing this note, I find the same verse occurs in some copies of *Johnie of Breadislie*, or *Johnie of Cocklesmuir*.

another in the "Border Minstrelsy." But to this ballad England lays claim as a production of her Minstrels, because there happen to be two ancient MS. copies of it preserved in her Libraries. The possession of ancient title-deeds does not, however, prove a right to property in which another has quietly been seated, and has enjoyed, unchallenged, for centuries. The history and poetry of Scotland has, it must be gratefully acknowledged, been deeply indebted to the pen of English Antiquarians for its elucidation and preservation, and also to the English Press for its early publication. But the pious care thus shown for the genius of another land does not authorize any appropriation thereof; and Scottish works whose authors were known have, of course, been unsubjected to the imposition of a new name as their authors, coming in the shape of that English Clerke who kindly undertook their transcription. But Scotland has been pillaged both of her Metrical Romance and of her Ancient Ballad by such appropriations. Fortunately for letters, these productions of her Minstrels, too often having only an oral existence, were, when heard in the southern parts of the kingdom, written down to be preserved either as mere curiosities, or as being recommended by the interest of their narratives. The amanuenses set their own names to the compositions they thus copied, and the criticks who subsequently examined these monuments gratuitously assigned the authorship to the scribe, or fixed the paternity of the composition by the country in which they found a manuscript of it extant; though the living song and the spoken language of another land everywhere bore allusions to, and proved its connection with, the literature thus unnaturally divorced

from it. The changes which Romance underwent were not so fatal as those to which the Historical Ballad was subjected, when it fell into the hands of the English scribe. The one suffered merely in its language, and that but slightly; but the other was, in addition to this, materially changed in its narrative, and a different colouring given to its facts, in order to harmonize better with the national prejudices and to gratify the national vanity of the copyist, or of those for whom its perusal or recitation, after it had undergone these alterations, was intended. That the "Battle of Otterbourne" was thus dealt with by an English transcriber appears obvious; for it studiously omits dilating on Percy's capture, while it accurately details his combat with Douglas; whereas it would appear that in the genuine Scottish version the capture of Percy formed a prominent incident, seeing it is the one by which the author of the "Complaynt" refers to the ballad:

> "The Percie and Mongumbrie met,
> That day, that woful day."

No English Historian alludes to this ballad as an English composition; whereas Hume of Godscroft, who wrote in the reign of James the Sixth, distinctly announces that the Scots' song of that Battle was different from the English,—the English ballad being that entitled "The Hunting of the Cheviot"; and he quotes the beginning of the ballad exactly as it is to be found yet preserved by tradition, and as the English MS. authorizes it. One strong proof that England cannot be considered as the birthplace of this ballad is, that at a subsequent period one of her Minstrels founded upon it "The Hunting of the Cheviot," in which he

gives rein to his imagination, and alters many circumstances. He was probably induced to make this diversion in favour of England by consequence of the extreme popularity of the other ballad, and because its text could not, while the facts were yet fresh in men's minds, and purse and person of many yet smarting, be safely moulded into any other form than that in which it was originally produced. But under a different name, and educing new incidents, and with allusions to other contests in which his countrymen had the advantage, Mr. Richard Sheale succeeded in supplanting the veritable narrative with his own Bulletin. This he unhesitatingly enriched with every thing valuable which, consistently with his plan, he could pillage from the other.

But Master Sheale, besides paring down facts to suit his views of propriety, and perchance of profit, appears also to have been indebted to Romance for some of the finest parts of his heroick poem. This noble and pathetick picture —

> "The Perci leanyde on his brand,
> And sawe the Duglas de;
> He tooke the dede mane be the hande,
> And said, Wo ys me for thee!
> To have savyde thy liffe, I wolde have pertyde with
> My landes for years thre;
> For a better man of hart nar of hande
> Was not in all the North Contrè" —

will be found to have an archetype in the "Romance of Kyng Alisaunder." When the Macedonian arrives at the spot where Darius had been assassinated by *Besas and Besanas*,

"Anon he lyghte of his hors,
And tok in armes that gentil cors";

on which, Darius addresses a few words to him before the spirit went, and the poet continues:

"Ac theo deol that Alisaunder made
No may Y nought fully rede.
Darie starf in his armes two:
Lord that Alisaunder was wo!
He wrong his hondes, saun faile;
Ofte he cried, and ofte he uaile,
'Y wolde Y hadde al Perce y-geve,
With that Y myghte have thy lif!"

And that gallant squire whom the Minstrel bewails —

"For Wetharynton my harte was wo,
That ever he slayne shulde be;
For when both his leggis wear hewyne into,
Yet he knyled and fought on his kne" —

finds a parallel for obstinate doughtiness in the Gigantick Burlonge, who encounters Sir Tryamoure, and by whom he is lopped down to reasonable fighting dimensions in the same way.*

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* "Hys swerde lyghtly he up hente,
And to Burlonge faste he wente,
For nothing wolde he flee.
And as he wolde have rysen agayne,
He smote his legges even a twayne,
Harde faste by the knee.
Tryamoure badde hym stande uprighte,
And all men may se now in fyghte
We ben mete of a syse.
Syr Tryamoure suffred hym
To take another wepen,
As a knyght of moche pryce.

The ancient ballad of "Chevy Chace" was, as is supposed, about the time of Elizabeth or James, rewritten and modernized, and became very popular, being one of the very few minstrel songs which the ballad writers of that day thought worthy of being printed. In Scotland it was altered so as to suit political feeling and flatter national vanity. That the view given of the ballad of "Otterbourne" may not be deemed extravagant, I may instance the ballad of "Thomas of Ersyldoune," no MS. copies of which exist in Scotland, but of which there exist, or did exist at one time, no less than three in England. It is, however, traditionally remembered in Scotland. This beautiful and strange tale of Faerylonde is not claimed as an English production, though it is only in England that ancient MSS. of it are extant; and yet it cannot be deemed entirely the production of the pen of True Thomas, or of the Minstrel who chose to ascribe the vaticinations to that seer, seeing it has been at an early period transcribed by an English Clerke, and from time to time interpolated with such stanzas as favoured a temporary political purpose, and could bear a construction inimical to the interests of that country of which the prophet was a native.

From the "Complaynt of Scotland" we also learn that there was a ballad on the subject of the Chevalier de la Beautè, who was murdered by the Homes during the regency of John, Duke of Albany. The two lines given in that work —

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Burlonge on his stompes stode,
As a man that was nye wode,
He fought wonder faste," &c.

Utterson's *Ancient Popular Poetry*, Vol. I., p. 69.

" God sen the Duc had byddin in France,
And Delabaute had neuyr cam hame "—

were probably the beginning of the ballad, and are all that now remains of it. The " Sang of Gilquhiskar," also mentioned in the " Complaynt," was perhaps an historick ballad. But nothing of it is known to antiquaries save the name. Such of our Historick Ballads as are still extant, and have found their way into various publications, do not require to be adverted to here, it being sufficient to notice them when the published collections in which they are contained come to be recapitulated.

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It may assist those who have hitherto paid little attention to the Traditionary Song of Scotland now to give a few slight notices of the several works in which its Historick and Romantick Ballads have successively appeared, and a list of the ballads themselves, which these compilations respectively contain. In giving this catalogue, it may once for all be mentioned that such ballads as are clearly supposititious, or of quite a modern date, will be passed over in silence. This list must necessarily be somewhat imperfect; but it may serve to the general reader all the purposes of reference, and to some more industrious and accurate cultivator of this kind of literature it may prove the starting-point of a more extended and minute inquiry.

As has already been urged, the songs, or ballads, which refer to matters of history, may, in most instances, be deemed coeval compositions with the facts on which they

are founded. Of course this class fixes the era of its production with sufficient precision; but with regard to the more numerous, and perchance more ancient, as well as interesting, description of Song which has been denominated the Romantick and Legendary Ballad, we have little else left than conjecture to assist us in assigning it a determinate age. A large portion of the ballads coming under this head *must* have arisen out of real events, and therefore ought to be reckoned as historick songs, could they only be satisfactorily traced to their origin. This, however, from the silence of authentick history, or from the dilapidations of Time, cannot be done. It is evident enough, however, to any skilful eye, that the latest of such compositions does not descend further than the middle of the seventeenth century.

The earliest collection of popular poetry known to have issued from the Scottish press is a volume printed at Edinburgh, "By Walter Chepman and Androw Myllar, in the year M.D.VIII." This volume is, with reason, supposed to be perfectly unique; no other than the copy preserved in the Advocates' Library being at this hour known to exist. As illustrative of the language and literature of Scotland at that early period, it is eminently curious and valuable; but the only part of its contents to which our subject leads us to refer is

"A GEST OF ROBYN HODE."

The appearance of which long ballad is not only an additional proof of the high popularity of that bold outlaw in Scotland, but goes to establish the fact, that the celebrity of his name in song was not alone owing to the carping of England's Minstrels, but to the equal labours of Northern

Gleemen. It is not meant, however, to claim this "Gest" as a Scottish production, though there certainly is some ground to do so; its appearance in Scotland preceding its imprint by Wynkyn de Worde by some years. Between the Scottish and English impression there occurs no difference, save in a few orthographical points.

The popular literature of Scotland and of England, about this period, appears to have been pretty much alike. One of the most interesting productions of the Saint Andrews press is "The Complaynt of Scotland," published, as is supposed, in the year 1549, and reprinted at Edinburgh, under the care of Dr. Leyden, in 1801. It is peculiarly valuable, as preserving, in that division of it styled "Ane monolog of the actor," what may be looked on as a tolerably full and accurate catalogue of the popular Romance and Song of its author's day; at all events, it is indicative of its author's taste in such matters. In character, it resembles the famous library of Captain Cox, whose books Laneham, in his letter from Kenilworth, hath daintily described as being "fair bound in parchment, and tyed with a whipcord." It would occupy too much space to repeat here that enumeration which the author of the "Complaynt" has given, or to echo again the illustrative notices which the learning and research of Dr. Leyden have bestowed upon the subject. The amount of our knowledge respecting the "storeis and flet taylis," or the "sweit melodious sangis of natural music, of the antiquitie," mentioned in the "Complaynt," has received but slender addition since Dr. Leyden wrote. "The taiyll of the reyde eyttyn witht the thre heydis" cannot now be found in Scottish Romance; but there is a ballad still tradition-

ally preserved, in which a Giant is introduced, equally endowed with heads; but whether he was a reyde Etin or no, the record is silent. He is thus described:

"Then flew the foul thief from the west,
His make was never seen;
He had three heads upon ae halse,
Three heads on ae breast bane.
He bauldly stepped to the king,
Seized steed in his right hand,
Says, 'Here am I, a valiant man,
Fight me now if ye can.'"

Alarmed by the rudeness of this uncouth combatant, the king exclaims,

"'Where is the man in a' my train
Will tak this deed in hand?
And he shall hae my dochter dear,
And third part of my land.'"

Whereupon a gentle knight, who had courted and won the affections of the said king's daughter (it may be well to mention, for the satisfaction of the curious, that she was "The king's daughter of Linne"), and received from her certain rare gifts, besides two precious rings, the virtues of which were to keep the body of the wearer invulnerable, and to staunch the blood of any one of his followers who might be wounded, undertakes the combat in these words:

"'O, here am I,' said young Ronald,
'Will tak the deed on hand;
An ye 'll gie me your dochter dear,
I 'll seek nane o' your land.'

'I wudna for my life, Ronald,
This day I left you here;
Remember ye, your lady gay
For you shed mony a tear.'
For he did mind on that ladie,
That he left him behin';
And he hadna mair fear to fight
Than a lion frae a chain.
Then he cut off that Giant's heads
Wi' ae sweep o' his hand;
Gaed hame and married his ladie
And heired her father's land."

In another ballad published in a recent collection * occurs an Etin of a different stamp, more courteous, it is true, than the triple-headed Giant now noticed, but still a fellow of prodigious strength (and a pagan to boot, — as which of them are not?); for

"He pou'd a tree out o' the wud,
The biggest that was there;
And he howket a cave monie fathoms deep,
And put May Marg'ret there.

These Etins by their deeds establish their claims to a Scandinavian extraction. "The tail quhou the kyng of est-

* *Ancient Scottish Ballads*, Edinburgh, 1827, p. 225. Of this ballad I have seen a much more perfect and beautiful version, entitled *Young Akin*, in an immense MS. collection of Traditionary ballads, &c., made by Mr. Buchan of Peterhead, which he intends for publication. The contents of that collection are of singular interest and value; and it is much to be desired that Mr. Buchan may meet with encouragement sufficient to induce him to give his work to the publick. It is the fruit of many years' labour, and to collect it must have cost its enthusiastick compiler a very serious expense.

mureland mareit the kyngis dochtir of vestmureland" Ritson has shown may probably be another name for the "Geste of Kyng Horn," in opposition to an opinion hazarded by Dr. Leyden and Sir Walter Scott that it might perhaps have had some affinity to the ballad of "King Estmere." Without expressing any opinion on this controverted point, I may mention that in one version of the ballad printed in the "Border Minstrelsy" under the title of "Fause Foodrage" I have found the three kings mentioned there as being

> "The Eastmure king, and the Westmure king,
> And the king of O Norie";—

certainly a very near approximation to the names contained in the above tale. In quoting the title of a song mentioned in the "Complaynt," the Editor of "The Songs of Scotland," Vol. I., p. 75, from his love of mutation, has fallen into an error, perhaps of little consequence, but just enough as should be lesson sufficient to every person of sound sense to quote precisely as it is writ and no otherwise. "Turne the sueit ville to me," which in modern orthography is "Turn thee, sweet Will, to me," has been altered by Mr. Cunningham into *Turn thy sweet will to me.* Had he spelled as he found his author did, he would have avoided this blunder.

During the heat of the Reformation, there were many "ballatis sangis blasphematious rhymes, alsweill of kirkmen as temporall and vtheris tragedies" published; but none of these, nor of the historick ballads during the reigns of James the Fifth, Queen Mary, and James the Sixth, have reached to our day in a *collected form.* That patchwork of blasphemy, absurdity, and gross obscenity, which the zeal of an early Reformer spawned under the captivating title of

"Ane compendiovs Bòoke of Godlie and Spiritvall Songs,"* is neither comprehended under the description of Song we are now in quest of, nor do its miserable and profane parodies reflect any trace whatever of the stately ancient narrative ballad.

The Aberdeen "Cantus," printed successively in the years 1662, 1666, and 1682,† though containing several old Songs, English as well as Scottish, does not supply any copies of Historical or Romantick ballads. Yet I find the burden of the nineteenth Song, third edition, is the same with that of an old ballad which records an Elfin knight's attempt to murder an innocent maiden whom he had persuaded to ride off with him to some greenwood side, but who, like the False Sir John of the ballad of "May Colvin," falls himself into the snare he had set for his love. The ballad alluded to begins thus:

"Lady Isabel sits in her bouir sewing,
Aye as the gowans grow gay;
She heard an Elf knight his horn blowing,
The first morning in May.

* "Ane Compendious Booke of Godly and Spirituall Songs, collectit out of sundrie Partes of the Scripture, with sundrie of other Ballates, changed out of Prophaine Sanges for avoyding of Sinne and Harlotrie, with Augmentatioun of sundrie Gude and Godly Ballates not contained in the first Edition. Newlie corrected and amended by the first Originall Copie. Edinburgh, printed by Andro Hart."

† "*Cantus* Songs and Fancies *To Three Four or Five Parts*, both apt for Voices and Viols. With a brief Introduction to Musick, as is taught in the Musick-school of *Aberdeen*. The Third Edition, much *Enlarged and Corrected*. Printed in ABERDEEN, by JOHN FORBES, and are to be sold at his Printing House, above the *Meal Market*, at the Sign of the TOVVNS ARMES. 1682."

She heard an Elf knight his horn blowing,
The first morning in May."

"In a list of books," says the Editor of the "Border Minstrelsy," "printed for and sold by P. Brocksby, 1688, occurs 'Dick a-the-Cow, containing North Country Songs.'" This collection, which is conjectured would have supplied many of the Border historical ballads and warlike ditties, besides the one mentioned in its title, is, unfortunately, not now extant, or at least is not known to the Bibliographer under that designation.

The compilation made and printed by James Watson, in three parts, the first of which appeared in 1706,* the second in 1709, and the third in 1710, has preserved several interesting parcels of our vernacular poetry, but contains none of the compositions connected with the present inquiry, unless the poem with which the second part opens, beginning

1. DURING THE REIGNE OF THE ROYAL ROBERT,†

be looked upon in this light. The same poem is mentioned in the "Complaynt of Scotland," 1549, among the "storeis and flet taylis," as "the ryng of the roy Robert."

Watson's work was succeeded by "The Evergreen, being a Collection of Scots Poems wrote by the Ingenious before

* "A Choice Collection of COMIC and SERIOUS *Scots Poems*, Both Ancient and Modern, By several Hands. PART I. EDINBURGH, Printed *by James Watson*, Sold *by John Vallange*. MDCC.VI."

† This poem occurs in the Maitland MS., and its author, according to that authority, was Dean David Steill, a Scottish poet, who is supposed to have flourished about the close of the fifteenth century. From the Maitland MS., Mr. Laing has printed a copy in his *Early Metrical Tales*, Edinburgh, 1826, to which are prefixed notices of the occasion of the poem, of its author, and of the editions which it has gone through.

1600," printed in two small 12mo. volumes at Edinburgh in 1724. This publication is highly creditable to the patriotism, industry, and good taste of its editor, the far-famed Song writer, Allan Ramsay. His principal materials were derived from a valuable manuscript presented by the Earl of Hyndford to the Advocates' Library, and since known by the name of its compiler as the Bannatyne MS. At the time Ramsay published, the business of editing Ancient poesy was not well understood; nor were the duties of an Editor, in that department of letters, accurately defined. The poet accordingly seems happily removed beyond the fear of being caught sleeping in his task; and far above feeling any annoyance when detected in the commission of any literal, verbal, or critical mistake. Indeed, it is questionable if greater editorial fidelity than what he vouchsafed to give would, in such matters, have then been duly appreciated. In the liberties which he took with the ancient Song of his country, he has, however, unfortunately supplied a precedent for posterity to quote, and set an example which men of less talent, and even less critical integrity, have been eager to imitate. The ballads of the description now wanted, printed in the "Evergreen," are not numerous.

They are, —

2. THE BATTLE OF HAIRLAW.

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2. Antiquaries have differed in opinion regarding the age of this composition; but the best informed have agreed in looking upon it as of coeval production, or nearly so, with the historical event on which it is founded; and in this opinion the present writer entirely coincides. No edition prior to Ramsay's time has been preserved, though it was printed in 1668, as we are informed by Mr. Laing in his *Early Metrical Tales*, an edition of that date having been in the curious library of old Robert Mylne. In the *Complaynt of Scotland*, 1549, this ballad is mentioned. In the *Polemo-Middinia* its tune is referred to:

3. JOHNIE ARMSTRANG.

4. THE REIDSQUAIR RAID.

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"Interea ante alios Dux *Piper Laius* heros
Præcedens, magnamque gerens cum burdine pypam,
Incipit *Harlai* cunctis sonare batellum."

And in a MS. collection of tunes, written in the hand of Sir William Mure of Rowallan, which I have seen, occurs "the battle of harlaw." From the extreme popularity of the Song, it is not to be wondered at, though every early imprint of it has now disappeared. Ramsay probably gave his copy from a stall edition of his own day, which copy has successively been edited by Mr. Sibbald, Mr. Finlay, and Mr. Laing, and has appeared in other collections. A copy, apparently taken from recitation, is given in *The Thistle of Scotland*, Aberdeen, 1823; the editor of which, among a good deal of stuff which is not very comprehensible, points out various localities, and gives three stanzas of a burlesque song on the same subject, popular in the North.

3. Ramsay mentions that this is the true old ballad of the famous John Armstrong of Gilnockhall in Liddisdale, and which he copied from a Gentleman's mouth of the name of Armstrong, who was the sixth generation from this John, and who told him that it was ever esteemed the genuine ballad, the common one false. This noted Border-pricker was gibbeted by James the Fifth, in 1529. The common ballad alluded to by Ramsay is the one, however, which is in the mouths of the people. His set I never heard sung or recited; but the other frequently. The common set is printed in *Wit Restored*, London, 1658, under the title of *A Northern Ballet*, and in the London collection of Old Ballads, 1723, as *Johney Armstrong's Last Goodnight*. That collection has another ballad on the subject of Armstrong, entitled *Armstrong and Musgrave's Contention*. In J. Stevenson's *Catalogue*, Edinburgh, 1827, is a copy on a broadside, with this title, "John Armstrong's last Farewell, declaring how he and eight score men fought a bloody battell at Edinburgh; to the tune of Fare thou well, bonny Gilt Knock Hall";—an edition still adhered to in the stall copies of the ballad. The version of the ballad as given in the *Evergreen* is followed by the editor of the *Border Minstrelsy*, in whose valuable compilation it finds a place with suitable illustrations.

4. Is given from the Bannatyne MS., but inaccurately. A

In the same year, 1724, Ramsay published another collection of considerable merit, viz. "The Tea Table Miscellany, being a Choice Collection of English and Scotch Songs," in which are inserted the following ballads; but whether derived from printed copies, or from tradition, is not mentioned:

5. WALY, WALY, GIN LOVE BE BONNY.
6. SWEET WILLIAM'S GHOST.

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correct copy from the same source occurs in the *Border Minstrelsy*. The Raid commemorated in song happened on 7th July, 1576.

It were discourteous not to mention that *Hardyknute*, a fragment originally printed in 1719, the ingenious fabrication of Lady Anne Wardlaw, likewise appeared in the *Evergreen*. It was long looked upon as an ancient composition, and many still cherish this fond and idle notion. It is not improbable, however, that, in the days of the accomplished authoress, there may have existed some historick song relative to the conflict of the Largs (somewhat like an enlarged version of the metrical account given of that event by Wintown), which she used as the foundation of her clever poem. In a volume of *Poems and Songs*, by Alexander Tait, 1790, which I suspect is now *scarce*, and certainly is *curious*, will be found a ballad of his inditing, on the same subject. He plunders from *Hardyknute* without remorse; but uses his spoil in such an odd way, and so peculiarly his own, that none who read him can forbear pardoning his plagiarisms.

5. This, perhaps, should not be included in the present list; for many versions induce me to believe that it is only a part of the ballad generally known under the title of *Jamie Douglas*, in some copies of which are to be found almost every stanza of the present Song incorporated. The tune is the same in both; and the narrative, so far as it can be guessed at, also coincides. In the appendix will be given a traditionary version of *Jamie Douglas*, corroborative of the opinion now hazarded. If Ramsay was the first who effected the divorce of the sentimental from the narrative parts of the ballad, he deserves some credit for his taste and ingenuity.

6. The two concluding stanzas of this ballad are looked on as a modern addition. In recited copies I have heard this

7. BONNY BARBARA ALLAN.

8. THE BONNY EARL OF MURRAY.

9. JOHNNY FAA, THE GYPSIE LADDIE.

"A Collection of Old Ballads, collected from the best and most ancient Copies extant, with Introductions, Historical, Critical, or Humourous," printed at London in 1723, 24, and 25, in 3 vols., 12mo., contains a copy of

10. GILDEROY,

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stanza repeated, which does not occur in printed copies; it follows the 14th stanza:

"My meikle tae is my gavil post,
My nose is my roof-tree;
My ribs are kebars to my house,
And there is nae room for thee."

A different version, *William and Marjorie*, is given in the present compilation, taken from the recitation of an old woman. This ballad, or part of it, is often made the tail-piece to others, where a deceased lover appears to his mistress.

7. An English version of this ballad is frequently to be met with. The eighth and ninth have appeared in numerous subsequent publications. Of the last many various sets exist: one is given from tradition in this work; another in Finlay's *Ballads;* a third in Mactaggart's *Gallovidian Dictionary*, improved, no doubt, by that strangest of all human editors; a fourth in Chambers's *Scottish Gipsies*, Edinburgh, 1823; and some scraps of a fifth set in one of the volumes of the Scots *Edinburgh Magazine*, the modesty of the correspondent who communicates it not permitting him to pollute the pages of that immaculate work with its grossness. He is really very considerate.

10. *Gilleroy* in Gaelic signifies *the red-haired lad;* Patrick McGregor, or Gilleroy, the subject of this ballad, suffered for his crimes in 1638, and his fate was commemorated in song. "The above-mentioned ballad," says the author of *Caledonia*, "was printed at Edinburgh, during the moment of Gilleroy's exit. It was certainly reprinted at London in the black letter before 1650. There is another copy of it, with some variations, in Playford's *Wit and Mirth*, first edition of vol. iii., which was printed in 1702. There is also a copy with variations in

but no other Scottish ballad. This is a very judicious compilation of English ballads; but there is no reference to the authorities from which they are obtained, which, in a work of the kind, is a serious defect.

Till the appearance of "The Reliques of Early English Poetry" in 1765, I am not aware of any intermediate publication which relates to the present inquiry. The singular merit of that work, not only as exhibiting much curious, profound, and accurate research into various departments of

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Durfy's *Songs*, 1719, vol. v. p. 39; and another with variations, in a collection, second edition, London, 1723, vol. ii. [vol. i.] p. 271. These copies, though possessing several stanzas of poetic merit, contained some indelicacies that required suppression. An altered and delicate edition appeared in Thomson's *Orpheus Caledonius*. But before this appeared, the ballad had been altered by Sir Alexander Halket, said Ritson in his *Scots Songs*, ii. 24; yet, according to a truer account, this operation on the old ballad was performed by Mrs. Elizabeth Hacket, the daughter of Pitferan, and the wife of Sir Henry Wardlaw, of Pittrevie, the real authoress of *Hardy Knute*. See *Blackwood's Magazine*, i., p. 380. The ballad of *Gilderoy*, on that new cast, may be seen in Percy's *Reliques*, i., 321, with the exception of one stanza; also in Herd's *Scots Songs*, i. 73, and in Ritson's *Scots Songs*, ii. 24, none of whom give the whole thirteen stanzas." — *Caledonia*, Vol. III., p. 36. I have seen a broadside printed at Edinburgh before 1700, which differs from the copies mentioned above. In Lady Wardlaw's amended copy, a good many of the old stanzas are retained; others are omitted, or in part retouched, and several from her own pen are added. It would seem, that, when Ritson consulted the *Museum* on this occasion, he had gone no farther than the index; for if he had turned to p. 67, he would have found that the piece entitled in the index "Gilderoy" was the song written to that tune, beginning

"Ah! Chloris, could I now but sit,"

and not any copy of the ballad itself, which nowhere in any of the six volumes of the *Museum* has a place. The song *Ah! Chloris* was composed by the Right Honourable Duncan Forbes, Lord President of the Court of Session, about 1710.

the history of Early English poetry,—a walk till then, comparatively speaking, unexplored,—but also as everywhere carrying with it traces of its editor's fine genius and chaste taste, has been long and fully appreciated. Important as the additions are which said work has made to our knowledge of ancient poesy, customs, and manners, the influence which it has had on the literature of the present day, and the change it has been the main instrument of producing on the character of its poetry, are of the most obvious and beneficial description.

The materials of his volumes were, as Dr. Percy informs us, principally obtained from an ancient MS., much dilapidated, and in many parts carelessly and inaccurately penned. Of the existence of this MS. no person can now doubt, since Ritson himself was at length reduced to the necessity of admitting its being. For the mode in which the pieces taken from this MS. were given to the publick, Dr. Percy has been rated by the critick now named, in no measured terms. With his own pen he had supplied the breaches time or accident had wrought in the originals,—he had curtailed some parts and expanded others, and had corrected literal or verbal errors in his text, without any previous intimation to the reader. This was the sum and substance,—"the front of his offending." Grave as these delinquencies might have been in a work exclusively projected for the use of the mere antiquarian, they appear venial, when it is considered that the object of the one in question was popular,—to imbue the general reader with a taste for olden poesy, to stimulate his curiosity, and direct his mind to congenial inquiries, and by no means intended to satisfy the minutest wish of the Archaiological scholar. How ably he

accomplished his views the work itself is sufficient testimony.

A number of the ballads published in the "Reliques" are of dubious origin, being common to Scotland as well as England. "The Battle of Otterbourne,"* "Glasgerion,"† "Child Waters,"‡ "The Knight and Shepherd's Daughter,"§ "Lord Thomas and Fair Ellinor,"‖ "The Childe of Elle,"** and even "Sir Cauline,"†† will all be found traditionally current in Scotland from time immemorial, differing, it is true, somewhat in form, but in substance essen-

* See Herd's collection.

† *Glenkindy* in Jamieson's collection.

‡ *Burd Ellen* of Jamieson's collection.

§ In many shapes current in Scotland, one of which is inserted in the present collection.

‖ The same is the case with this.

** Resembles *Young Erlinton*.

†† This romantick ballad exists in Scotland, under the title of *King Malcolm and Sir Colvine*. It has never been printed. There is a copy in Mr. Buchan's MS., above referred to, which begins thus:

"There lived a king in fair Scotland,
King Malcolm called by name,
Whom ancient history does record
For valour, worth, and fame.
And it fell ance upon a day,
The king sat doun to dine;
And there he missed a favourite knight,
His name was Sir Colvine.
But out it spak anither knight,
Ane of Sir Colvin's kin:
'He 's lying in bed, right sick of luve,
All for your daughter Jean.'"

It describes the combat between Sir Colvine and the "Knight of Elrick's hill," in which the former is victorious, and then concludes:

"Up he has ta'en that bloody hand,
Set it before the king;
And the morn it was Wodensday,
He married his daughter Jean."

tially agreeing with the English versions: the paternity of these, therefore, we shall not now discuss. The following ballads which appeared in the "Reliques" belong to Scotland:

11. THE JEW'S DAUGHTER.

12. QUHY DOIS ZOUR BRAND SAE DRAP WI' BLUID?

13. SIR PATRICK SPENS.

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11. Stated to be given from a MS. copy sent from Scotland. Herd gives this and another version, entitled *Sir Hugh*, in his collection. Mr. Jamieson gives a third copy, and in this collection is a fourth variety of this exceedingly popular ballad.

12. "This curious song was transmitted to the Editor by Sir D. Dalrymple, Bart., late Lord Hailes." — Percy. It is rather a detached portion of a ballad. The verses of which it consists generally conclude the ballad of the *Two Brothers*, and also some versions of *Lizie Wan*. A ballad of the same nature seems to be known in Germany, for it is quoted in Werner's tragedy of *The Twenty-fourth of February*. In the *Finnische Runen* of Schroter is given a traditionary ballad known in Finland, entitled *Weriner Pojka*, *The Bloody Son*, a very counterpart of the Scottish ballad.

13. This has been considered one of the oldest of our historick ballads. The Editor of the *Border Minstrelsy* recovered a much fuller set, which is here printed, and furnished Mr. Jamieson with another version, which is inserted in his compilation. One of the best sets of this ballad is yet unedited. It is in the MS. of Mr. Buchan, before referred to, and one stanza of it happily confirms the opinion which I ventured to express, regarding the event which gave rise to the ballad; a few lines of this it may be worth while to quote:

"'Ye 'll eat and drink, my merry men,
And see ye be weel thorn;
For blaw it weet or blaw it wind,
My gude ship sails the morn.'
Then out it speaks a gude auld man,
A gude deid mat he die:
'Whatever I do, my gude master,
Take God your guide to be.
For late yestreen I saw the new meen,
The auld meen in her arm.'

14. EDOM O' GORDON.

15. THE HEIR OF LINNE.

16. YOUNG WATERS.

17. GIL MORRICE.

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'Ohon, alace,' says Sir Patrick Spens,
'That bodes a deadly storm.
But I maun sail the seas the morn,
And likewise sae maun you,
*To Norway wi' our king's daughter,*
*A chosen Queen she 's now.*'"

14. I have heard a different set of this ballad, the locality of which is Loudoun castle, in Ayrshire. The one in the *Reliques* was printed at Glasgow by R. and A. Foulis, 1755, in 8vo., 12 pages, being taken by Lord Hailes from the recitation of a lady. On the authority of his MS., which it seems contained this ballad, Dr. Percy made some alterations in the Glasgow edition. The event on which it is founded occurred in 1578. Ritson, in his *Ancient Songs*, has given from the Cotton library a copy entitled *Captain Care*, "the undoubted original," as he says, "of the Scottish ballad." This, it seems, has at the end, "Finis per me Will^m. Asheton, Clericum," the name, he supposes, of the author; but it is evident that Master Asheton was merely the clerk who transcribed it.

15. Is given from the Editor's MS. The traditionary version extant in Scotland begins thus:

"The bonnie heir, the weel-faur'd heir,
And the weary heir o' Linne,
Yonder he stands at his father's gate,
And naebody bids him come in.
O see whare he gangs and see whare he stands,
The weary heir o' Linne,
O see whare he stands on the cauld causey,
Some ane wuld ta'en him in.
But if he had been his father's heir,
Or yet the heir o' Linne,
He wadna stand on the cauld causey,
Some ane wuld ta'en him in."

16. Is "given from a copy printed not long since at Glasgow, in one sheet, 8vo. The world is indebted for its publication to the Lady Jean Hume, sister to the Earl of Hume, who died at Gibraltar." — Percy. I have never met with any traditionary version of this ballad.

17. Will be noticed at length hereafter.

18. FAIR MARGARET AND SWEET WILLIAM.

19. LORD THOMAS AND FAIR ANNET.

In the preface to "Albyn's Anthology," Edinburgh, 1800, its Editor, the late Mr. Campbell, mentions, that "in the year 1755, 'A Collection of Old Ballads' was printed at Glasgow." At that time a number of ballads were separately printed by the Foulises, and these, when gathered together, might form the collection referred to above.

In 1769, Mr. Herd published his "Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, Heroick Ballads," &c., and again in 1776, in two volumes; a collection of much merit, and one wherein many curious lyrical pieces have found a sanctuary. The principal faults of this compilation consist in its ancient and modern pieces being indiscriminately mingled together; and that no reference is ever made to the authorities from which they are derived, except what this slight announcement contains: — "It is divided into three parts. The first is composed of all the Scottish Ancient and Modern Heroick Ballads, or Epic Tales, together with some beautiful fragments of this kind. Many of these are recovered from tradition, or old MSS., and never before printed. The second part consists of Sentimental, Pasto-

18. The common title of this ballad, which is a favourite of the Stalls, is *Fair Margaret's Misfortunes.*

19. Was transmitted from Scotland. Some traditionary copies of the ballad have this stanza, which is the 19th in order:

"And 4 and 20 milkwhite swans,
Wi' their wings stretch'd out wide,
To blaw the stour aff the highway,
To let fair Annie ride."

Mr. Jamieson has published a copy from recitation, entitled *Sweet Willie and Fair Annie*, of very great beauty.

ral, and Love Songs; and the third is a collection of Comic, Humorous, and Jovial Songs." — Preface, p. viii., Edition, 1776. The ballads undermentioned appeared to be those which, till the date of this publication, had not appeared in a collected form:

20. THE YOUNG LAIRD OF OCHILTREE.
21. BOTHWELL.
22. FINE FLOWERS IN THE VALLEY.
23. LIZIE WAN.

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20. Another copy of this historick ballad, under its correct title, the *Laird of Logie*, is given from recitation in the *Border Minstrelsy*. There is another set of it to be found in stall prints, which has a chance of being the original ballad, as composed at the time of the Laird's deliverance, in 1592.

21. This ballad is very popular, and is known to reciters under a variety of names. I have heard it called *Lord Bangwell*, *Bengwill*, *Dingwall*, *Brengwill*, &c., and *The Seven Sisters, or the Leaves of Lind*. In the *Border Minstrelsy*, Vol. III., 72, fifth edition, is a version, entitled *Cospatrick*. The same authority mentions that a copy in Mrs. Brown of Falkland's MS. is styled *Child Brenton*. Mr. Jamieson has translated a Danish ballad, *Ingefred and Gudrune* (*Northern Antiquities*, p. 340), wherein he points out the striking resemblance it bears to the present one. In a book, misnamed *Remains of Galloway and Nithsdale Song*, it is titled, *We were sisters, we were seven*. It is amusing to see this motley version challenging that in the *Border Minstrelsy*, as being interspersed with modern patches, and claiming for itself the merit of being a pure and unalloyed traditionary copy. Unparalleled impudence!

22. Another copy of this is given in *Popular Ballads and Songs*, Vol. I., 66, under the title of *The Cruel Brother; or the Bride's Testament*. It is a very common ballad, and has been wafted to distant parts of the island, as appears from a copy to be found in "Some Ancient Christmas Carols," &c., collected by Davies Gilbert, London, 1823, p. 68, styled *The Three Knights*. The other ballad in said book, called *The Three Sisters*, is a Scottish one; but of which the editor has given an imperfect version.

23. The copy of this ballad is from tradition, and agrees

24. MAY COLVIN.

25. THE WEE WEE MAN.

26. BONNY MAY.

27. LAMMIKIN.

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pretty accurately with other recited copies. There are several other ballads on the same disagreeable topick to be frequently met with, some of which have not as yet been edited.

24. A fuller set of this is given by Mr. Sharpe, in his *Ballad Book*, taken from recitation; but I have seen a printed stall copy as early as 1749, entitled *The Western Tragedy*, which perfectly agrees with Mr. Sharpe's copy. I have also seen a later stall print, called *The Historical Ballad of May Culzean*, to which is prefixed some local tradition, that the lady there celebrated was of the family of Kennedy, and that her treacherous and murder-minting lover was an Ecclesiastick of the monastery of Maybole. In the parish of Ballantrae, on the seacoast, there is a frowning precipice pointed out to the traveller, as "Fause Sir John's Loup." In the North Country, at the water of Ugie, I am informed by Mr. Buchan, there is a similar distinction claimed for some precipice there. The same gentleman has recovered other two ballads on a similar story: one called *The Water o' Wearie's Well;* and the other, from its burden, named *Aye as the gowans grow gay;* in both of which the heroes appear to have belonged to the Elfin tribe.

25. Is also printed in this collection, which see.

26. In the *Border Minstrelsy* a finer copy of this ballad, said to be the original song of the *Broom of the Cowdenknows*, is given. It would be endless to enumerate the titles of the different versions of this popular song which are common among reciters.

27. Another set is published in this compilation. There is a "Lambirkyns wod" near Dupplin in Perthshire. Can this have got its name from the cruel mason whom the ballad assures us "lived in the wode"? If so, it must be very ancient. It is localized, too, I believe, at Balwearie, in Fifeshire; but there are few places where the ballad is remembered, but which have also some ancient edifice in the neighbourhood, reared by the hands of Lammikin. Indeed, it seems questionable how some Scottish lairds could well afford to get themselves seated in the large castles they once occupied, unless they occasionally treated the mason after the fashion adopted in this ballad.

28. EARL RICHARD.

29. THE BONNY LASS OF LOCHRYAN.

30. THE BATTLE OF OTTERBURN.

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28. Is imperfect; but two perfect copies are given in the *Minstrelsy of the Border*: one entitled *Earl Richard*, made up of two copies, to be found in Herd's MS.; and the other supplied by the Ettrick Shepherd, from the recitation of his mother, named *Lord William*. Under the first title is another version, to be found in *Scarce Ancient Ballads*, Aberdeen, 1822, p. 3, disguised under uncouth orthography, and considerably interpolated by its editor. Another set of this popular ballad is in Kinloch's *Ancient Scottish Ballads*, entitled *Young Redin;* and in Mr. Buchan's MS. is preserved yet another copy, the title of which has escaped my memory.

29. Is given in another shape in the *Border Minstrelsy*, Vol. II., p. 433, fifth edition; and another variety of it occurs in Mr. Jamieson's *Popular Ballads and Songs*, Vol. I., p. 36. Mr. Cunningham, in his *Songs of Scotland*, Vol. I., p. 298, has, in his version, favoured the world with an ample specimen of his own poetical talents. His improved readings are very pretty; but ingenuity is ill bestowed when employed to vitiate truth, though it be but in an old song. It is curious to remark how the catastrophe of many ballads, like the present, arises from the witchcraft and sorceries of malicious mothers.

30. Is the Scottish traditionary version of the *Battle of Otterburn*. The hiatus in a verse of Herd's copy a recited copy enables me to supply:

> "O yield thee to yon braken bush,
> That grows upon yon lilly lie;
> *For there lies aneth yon braken bush*
> *What aft has conquer'd mae than thee.*"

Another version is given in the *Border Minstrelsy;* and Mr. Finlay, in the introduction to his *Historical and Romantic Ballads*, Vol. I., p. 18, has preserved two stanzas of another copy. The ballad preserved in the Harleian and Bodleian collections, we may repeat, is certainly a Scottish composition, though altered for the nonce by the English transcriber. The last line of the third stanza, Dr. Percy says, is corrupt in both MSS., being "Many a styrande stage," and he has altered it thus, "Styrande many a stagge," a change in which subsequent editors have silently acquiesced; but the reading of the MS. is,

31. KERTON HA', OR THE FAIRY COURT.

32. CLERK COLVILLE.

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I suspect, right, and the commentator wrong; for *stage* or *staig* in Scotland means a young horse unshorn of its masculine attributes; and the obvious intention of the poet is merely to describe that the Scottish alighted from many a prancing steed in order to prepare for action, not to amuse themselves with hunting deer. The lines should therefore be, —

"Upon Grene Leyton they lighted dowyn
[Off] many a styrande stage."

It was one of the Border laws, that the Scottish array of battle should be on foot. The horses were used but for a retreat or pursuit. Various old ballads allude to this custom of debating matters of life and death on foot. See *Childe of Elle*, *Douglas Tragedy*, &c. The ballad itself confirms this reading; see Fytte 2:

"With that the Perssye was grevyd sore,
Forsoth as I yow saye;
He lyghted dowyn upon hys foote,
And schotte his horse clene away."

31. Appeared in a completer form in Johnson's *Museum*, Vol. V., p. 423, as *Tam Linn*, which was altered and reprinted in Lewis's *Tales of Wonder*. A more formidable edition was published in the *Border Minstrelsy*, some verses of which — we allude to those supplied by some ingenious gentleman, residing near Langholm — are clearly supposititious, and ought to be omitted. The "tail of Young Tamlene" is mentioned in the *Complaynt of Scotland*, and Dr. Leyden concludes that it was a Romance of Faerye, which, in its transmission to the present times, has acquired its present balladized form. I suspect its title of *Thomlin* or *Thomalin*, a diminutive of Thomas, was given to distinguish it from the Vaticinal Rhymes, which were early current, under the title of *True Thomas*, or *Thomas the Rhymer*. The poet of Ercildoune was seduced by fairy charms to expatriate himself, and it was only to avoid paying the tax to Hell, which also disturbed the happiness of Thomalin, that he was compelled to revisit this world. A lusty, full grown man must have been a great aid to the Fairy Exchequer, when its subsidies to the Devil had to be paid in kind.

32. Was reprinted in *The Tales of Wonder*, with some additions and alterations. Pinkerton gives a fragment about a

33. WILLIE AND ANNET.

34. THE CRUEL KNIGHT (a Fragment).

35. WHA WILL BAKE MY BRIDAL BREAD (a Fragment).

36. I 'LL WAGER, I 'LL WAGER (a Fragment).

37. THE LOWLANDS OF HOLLAND.

38. AND THERE SHE LEANT HER BACK TO A THORN.

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Mermaid, which he afterwards acknowledged to be a fabrication of his own; but Mr. Finlay maintains that it is old, — which, however, I do n't believe; though the subject, I grant, is old enough, and very common in the tales of almost every country. Furthermore, *The Fause Mermaid*, in Mr. Finlay's *Ballads*, is evidently a modern composition. *The Mermaid of Gallowa*, printed in *Remains of Galloway and Nithsdale Song* as a traditionary ballad, is now admitted to be from the pen of Mr. Cunningham.

33. Was published in another shape, under the title of *Sweet Willie*. A good traditional version of it is given in this collection, namely, *Fair Janet*, taken from the *Ballad Book*.

34. Is a fragment which was afterwards completed by Mr. Finlay, under the title of *Young Johnston and the Young Colonel*, and is also inserted in this collection, with a few additions and variations. For the sake of poetick justice to the Young Johnston, from another version I give the lines which explain his reason for slaying his love, and which follow in order that stanza wherein she upbraids him for his cruelty:

"Ohon! alace! my lady gay,
To come sae hastilie;
I thought it was my deadly fae
Ye had trysted into me!"

35. Is the fragment of *Fair Annie* referred to in this collection, where the different published versions of the ballad are also mentioned.

36. Occurs in a fuller shape in the *Border Minstrelsy*, as *The Broomfield Hill*; but this is a ballad which has long been printed under the title of *The West Country Wager*.

37. Also occurs in Johnson's *Museum*, with some variations; but neither of the copies are so full as one which may occasionally be met with in stall editions, published about sixty years ago.

38. Is a ballad generally printed under the title of *The Cruel*

### 39. EARL DOUGLAS (a Fragment).

In 1781, the late Mr. Pinkerton published his "Scottish Tragic Ballads," a thin volume printed at London, which was followed, in 1783, by "Select Scottish Ballads," in two volumes: the first whereof is a reprint of the "Tragick Ballads," with several augmentations, and the second contains "Songs and Humourous Poems." In these Mr. P. planted a considerable number of effusions from his own pen, alleged to be ancient, but which he had the candour to confess were fabrications; when Ritson, with an acrimony by no means within the limits of good taste or common politeness, took him to task on the subject. His recantation will be found in "List of Scottish Poets," prefixed to "Ancient Scottish Poems," p. cxviii. His sins, as an editor of old ballads, have been fully enough detailed by his literary antagonists, and it is not now of moment to resume the ungracious task of reprehension. The only old ballad his volumes contain, not till his time inserted in our collections, is

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*Mother*. Innumerable and curious versions of it are to be obtained from recitation, much better than any hitherto printed.

39. Is a fragment of *Jamie Douglas*, published afterwards more fully by Mr. Finlay, Vol. II., p. 1. The name "black Fastnes," occurring in these copies, is a curious instance of the sound misleading the sense. Herd and Finlay have both printed it as being the name of the malicious individual who sowed dissension betwixt Douglas and his lady, instead of being, as it assuredly is, a mere rhetorical figure. It is the abbreviated way of pronouncing *Falsetness*, Faustness; a fact which the keen eye of a recent Editor of old Ballads could not see, though he discerned at once that a "Tailliant" must of necessity be an "Italian." An imperfect version of this ballad is in his collection, named *The Laird of Blackwood*. *Ancient Scottish Ballads*, p. 58. A stall copy of this ballad was printed in 1798, under the title of *Fair Orange Green*.

40. SIR JAMES THE ROSE.

In 1784, a *gurdy* little volume was published at Hawick, by George Caw, having this title: — "The Poetical Museum, containing Songs and Poems on almost every Subject, mostly from Periodical Publications." In that work appeared the following ballads, which were afterwards inserted in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," namely:

41. DICK O' THE COW.

42. JOCK O' THE SIDE.

43. HOBBIE NOBLE.

"The New British Songster, a Collection of Songs, Scots and English, with Toasts and Sentiments, for the Bottle," Falkirk, 1785, furnishes a ballad which belongs to a numerous class of Scottish legends, the merit of which is not very obvious, it consisting, for the most part, of enigmatical questions and answers. These metrical riddles, however, are sufficiently ancient, and can be traced throughout the early poetry of almost every land. This ballad is entitled

44. CAPTAIN WEDDERBURN'S COURTSHIP.

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40. "Printed," as is said, "from a modern edition, in one sheet, 12mo., after the old copy." On this was founded the popular ballad of *The Buchanshire Tragedy, or Sir James the Ross*, said to be written by Michael Bruce.

44. This is also inserted in Mr. Jamieson's *Popular Ballads and Songs*. Few are more popular; it occurs in every assortment of stall literature. Wintown is copious in his details of an attempt made by the Devil to puzzle, by curious questioning, that singularly holy and wise man, Saint Serf; but, as usual, the Saint prevails in this combat of wit and learning. Of a similar nature is that recorded in a Gallowegian tale, named *The Fause Knight upon the Road*, wherein the fiend is baffled by the pertinent answers of a "wee boy," who must have been a very saint in miniature. As this ballad has never been printed,

James Johnson, Musick-seller in Edinburgh, began publishing his valuable work, entitled "The Scots Musical Museum," in 1787, and continued doing so till 1803, when

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and is briefer than these compositions generally are, it is now given:

"O whare are ye gaun?
Quo' the fause knicht upon the road;
I 'm gaun to the scule,
Quo' the wee boy, and still he stude.
What is that upon your back?
Quo' the fause knicht upon the road;
Atweel it is my bukes,
Quo' the wee boy, and still he stude.
What 's that ye 've got in your arm?
Quo' the fause knicht, &c.
Atweel it is my peit,
Quo' the wee boy, &c.
Wha 's aucht they sheep?
Quo' the fause knicht, &c.
They are mine and my mither's,
Quo' the wee boy, &c.
How monie o' them are mine?
Quo' the fause knicht, &c.
A' they that hae blue tails,
Quo' the wee boy, &c.
I wiss ye were on yon tree,
Quo' the fause knicht, &c.
And a gude ladder under me,
Quo' the wee boy, &c.
And the ladder for to break,
Quo' the fause knicht, &c.
And you for to fa' doun,
Quo' the wee boy, &c.
I wiss ye were in yon sie,
Quo' the fause knicht, &c.
And a gude bottom under me,
Quo' the wee boy, &c.
And the bottom for to break,
Quo' the fause knicht upon the road;
And ye to be drowned,
Quo' the wee boy, and still he stude."

the sixth, and last, of his attenuated volumes seems to have appeared; though, from Musical works generally not having in their title-pages, or elsewhere, the year in which they happen to be printed, considerable doubts are bred regarding the date of their publication. In one or other of his volumes will be found these ballads:

45. LORD RONALD MY SON.

46. GEORDIE.

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In the *Legenda Aurea*, a tale occurs of a worthy bishop who was a devoted admirer of Saint Andrew, much to the dissatisfaction of the Devil. The Evil One transforms himself into a comely wench, who speedily found favour in the holy man's sight, and there is no saying but his soul might have been placed in jeopardy by her blandishments on one occasion, when feasting together, had it not been for a loud knocking at the gate, which opportunely disturbed their enjoyments. On looking out, a poor pilgrim was seen beating furiously for admittance. The fiend lady, afraid lest her victim should escape her machinations, stipulates, that, before the pilgrim be admitted, he should answer certain three questions, to be propounded by her. The pilgrim, being no less a personage than Saint Andrew, answered the two first questions promptly, and the third to so much purpose, that the fiend immediately flew off in native ugliness, filling the air with horrid imprecations, whereby the bishop saw at once his imminent peril, and became still more unremitted in his devotions at the shrine of the Saint who thus interposed in his behalf.

45. Many versions of this exist. It appears in the *Border Minstrelsy* as *Lord Randal*, and is known to nurses as *The Bonnie Wee Croudlin Doo*.

46. Of this many variations exist among reciters. One of the copies is styled *Geordie Luklie*. In Ritson's *Northumberland Garland*, 1793, is *A Lamentable Ditty made upon the Death of a Worthy Gentleman, named George Stoole, &c., to a delicate Scottish Tune*, evidently imitated from the Scottish song. Mr. Kinloch has published another version in his *Ancient Scottish Ballads*, p. 192, and quotes a passage from Buchanan as the probable source from which the ballad had its origin. One set makes Geordie very ungratefully drown his deliverer in the sea, in a fit of jealousy. 'T is a pity the rascal escaped the gallows.

47. THE BROOM BLOOMS BONNY, THE BROOM BLOOMS FAIR.

48. GUDE WALLACE.

In 1790, R. Morison & Son, of Perth, published "A Select Collection of Favourite Scottish Ballads," in 6 vols., 12mo., a neat compilation from Ramsay, Herd, Percy's "Reliques," Pinkerton, &c.; but it contains no ballads not elsewhere printed.

Ritson's curious and valuable collection of "Ancient Songs from the Time of King Henry III. to the Revolution," London, 1790, has four ballads, all of which are traditionally preserved in Scotland, namely:

49. THE THREE RAVENS.

50. THE UNGRATEFUL KNIGHT AND THE FAIR FLOWER OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

51. THE LIFE AND DEATH OF SIR HUGH OF THE GRIME.

52. A LAMENTABLE BALLAD OF A COMBAT BETWEEN SIR JAMES STEWARD AND SIR GEORGE WHARTON.

It also contains the copy of "CAPTAIN CARE" before referred to.

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47. Printed in full in this collection; only three stanzas were given in the *Museum*.

48. Also in Jamieson's *Ballads*, with additions by the Editor. Likewise in Finlay's *Ballads*. Another version occurs in Buchan's *Gleanings*, p. 114; and in Laing's *Thistle of Scotland*, p. 100, will be found yet another version of this popular ballad. The copy given in *The Songs of Scotland* is, as usual, inlaid with the Editor's own mosaick work.

49. Traditionary versions of this will be found in the *Border Minstrelsy*, and in Albyn's *Anthology*. I have met with several copies almost the same as in Ritson.

50. A Scottish version appears in Kinloch's *Ballads*, under the title of *The Provost's Daughter*.

51. See Johnson's *Museum*, the *Border Minstrelsy;* it is a very common ballad.

52. A traditionary version is in the *Border Minstrelsy*.

"Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, Heroic Ballads, &c., in two volumes, Edinburgh, printed for Lawrie and Symington, 1791," is, so far as regards its ballads, merely a republication of Herd's collection, already noticed, with a few of Mr. Pinkerton's effusions in the ballad vein, by way of augmentation.

"The Northumberland Garland, or Newcastle Nightingale, a Matchless Collection of Favourite Songs," printed at Newcastle, 1793, one of the numerous compilations of the industrious Ritson, has a ballad entitled "Fair Mabel of Wallington," which in Scotland is traditionally preserved, though in a less perfect form, under the name of

53. THE MILD MARY.

In 1794, in 2 vols., 12mo., appeared Ritson's interesting work on "Scottish Song," which must long remain a text-book, for the care and accuracy bestowed upon it by its editor. From a stall print he gives the popular ballad of

54. THE DUKE OF GORDON'S THREE DAUGHTERS.

"An Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland, &c., by Alexander Campbell, to which are subjoined Songs of the Lowlands of Scotland, carefully compared with the original Editions," Edinburgh, 1798, 4to., does not make any addition to our stock of ballads. It for this reason need not have been noticed. The Editor says, that, "in the songs contained in his compilation, he followed the earliest and best editions"; but he does not say what these are, nor where found. Can this have been an intentional omission on the part of the Editor, to save himself from what is in Scotland known as "back spiering"?

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53. In Mr. Buchan's manuscript, I have seen another version under a different title, which has escaped my memory.

Mr. Lewis's "Tales of Wonder," London, 1800, in 2 vols., 8vo., contain some Scottish ballads of the preternatural cast; but modernized and improved so as to suit the other contents of that work. These, therefore, do not require to be adverted to here, they having all been subsequently published in their own proper habiliments elsewhere.

"Scottish Poems of the Sixteenth Century," Edinburgh, 1801, one of the numerous useful publications, illustrative of Scottish History, edited by Mr. Dalzell, advocate, contains the ballad of

55. THE BATTLE OF BALRINNES.

In 1802, the first two volumes of "The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border" issued from the Kelso press, so justly celebrated for correctness and typographical beauty.* A third volume was added in 1803. It has gone through frequent editions since then, the arrangement of the contents in the subsequent editions differing somewhat from that of the earlier. The edition used for reference here is the fifth, Edinburgh, 1812.

It is no feeble commendation of the present writer which

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55. Fought in 1594, by the Earls of Huntley and Erroll against Argyle. It is also known under the title of *Battle of Glenlivet;* a copy is in the Pepys collection. What Mr. Dalzell has given is, I suppose, from a copy in the Advocates' Library, printed at Edinburgh in 1681, 12mo. A version of this ballad is partly printed in *Popular Ballads and Songs*. A copy is printed in *Scarce Ancient Ballads*, Aberdeen, 1822, from whence obtained is not mentioned. From the same quarter I have seen stall prints of it. A collated copy is to be wished for, as the versions now mentioned serve to correct errors and supply omissions, to be found in each separately.

* Preface to Albyn's *Anthology*, Edinburgh, 1816, p. viii.

can enhance the value of this great national work. Fortunate it was for the Heroick and Legendary Song of Scotland that this work was undertaken, and still more fortunate that its execution devolved upon one so well qualified in every respect to do its subject the most ample justice. Long will it live a noble and interesting monument of the unwearied research, curious and minute learning, genius, and taste of its illustrious Editor. It is truly a patriot's legacy to posterity; and, much as it may now be esteemed, it is only in times yet gathering in the bosom of far futurity, when the interesting traditions, the chivalrous and romantick legends, the wild superstitions, the Tragick song of Scotland, have wholly faded from the living memory, that this gift can be duly appreciated. It is then that these volumes will be conned with feelings akin to religious enthusiasm, — that their strange and mystick lore will be treasured up in the heart as the precious record of days for ever passed away, — that their grand, stern legends will be listened to with reverential awe, as if the voice of a remote ancestor, from the depths of the tomb, had woke the thrilling strains of martial antiquity.

The following ballads were not published till they appeared in the "Border Minstrelsy":

56. AULD MAITLAND.

57. THE SANG OF THE OUTLAW MURRAY.

58. LORD EWRIE.

59. THE LOCHMABEN HARPER.

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56. Is supposed with reason to relate to the hero mentioned in Douglas's *Palice of Honour*, — "Thair saw I Maitland upon auld beird gray." If so, the ballad must be very ancient.

59. Another version of this is in the *Museum*.

60. JAMIE TELFER OF THE FAIR DODHEAD.
61. KINMONT WILLIE.
62. THE DEATH OF FEATHERSTONHAUGH.
63. BARTHRAM'S DIRGE.
64. ARCHIE OF CA'FIELD.
65. ARMSTRONG'S GOODNIGHT.
66. THE FRAY OF SUPORT.
67. LORD MAXWELL'S GOODNIGHT.
68. THE LADS OF WAMPHRAY.
69. THE BATTLE OF PHILIPHAUGH.
70. THE GALLANT GRAHAMS.
71. THE BATTLE OF PENTLAND HILLS.
72. THE BATTLE OF LOUDON HILL.
73. THE BATTLE OF BOTHWELL BRIDGE.
74. ERLINTON.
75. THE DOUGLAS TRAGEDY.
76. YOUNG BENJIE.
77. PROUD LADY MARGARET.

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69, 70, 71. A Covenanting strain on the subject of the troubles detailed in these ballads Mr. Laing has printed in his curious work, *Fugitive Scottish Poetry of the Seventeenth Century*, Edinburgh, 1825, under the title of *Bothwell Lines*; and to counterbalance it he gives another, written by a well-wisher of his Majesty, entitled, *A Description of the Insurrection that was in the West*. In profane poesy the Covenanters seem to have been any thing but excellent.

74. May be compared with *The Child of Elle*, *The Douglas Tragedy*, and *Ribolt and Guldborg*, translated by Mr. Jamieson from the *Kæmpe Viser*. In the *Songs of Scotland* occurs another copy, thickly bestrewn, however, with the ingenious Editor's emendations.

77. This ballad is imperfect in the *Minstrelsy*, for it omits the grave advice which the ghostly brother gave to his proud sister, who in my copy is named Janet. The full set of the ballad concludes thus:

78. SIR HUGH LE BLOND.

79. GRÆME AND BEWICK.

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"My body 's buried in Dumfermline,
And far beyond the sea;
But day nor night nae rest could get
A' for the pride o' thee.
Leave aff your pride, Jolly Janet, he says,
Use it not any mair;
Or when ye come whare I hae been,
Ye will repent it sair.
Cast aff, cast aff, sister, he says,
The gowd band frae your crown;
For if ye gang whare I hae been,
Ye 'll wear it laigher down.
When ye 're in the gude kirk set,
The gowd pins in your hair,
Ye tak mair delyte in your feckless dress
Than ye do in your mornin pray'r.
And when ye waulk in the kirk yaird
And in your dress are seen,
There is nae lady that sees your face
But wishes your grave were green.
Ye 're straight and tall, handsome withall,
But your pride owergangs your wit;
But if you do not your ways refrain,
In *Pirie's chair* ye 'll sit.
In Pirie's chair ye 'll sit, I say,
The lowest seat o' hell,
If ye do not mend your ways,
It 's there that ye must dwell.
Wi' that he vanished frae her sight
In the twinklin o' an eye;
And naething mair the lady saw
But the gloomy cluds and sky."

The Scottish parliament seems often to have afflicted itself in passing acts against the sumptuous and costly claithing of ladies. But this ballad must have done more good than a hundred sumptuary enactments; for it consigned the fair contraveners at once to hell, and to a particular spot of it, of which my ignorance of localities does not enable me to give any farther information than the text affords.

80. THE LAMENT OF THE BORDER WIDOW.
81. JOHNIE OF BREADISLIE.
82. KATHARINE JANFARIE.
83. THE DOWIE DENS OF YARROW.
84. THE GAY GOSSHAWK.
85. BROWN ADAM.
86. JELLON GRAME.
87. WILLIE'S LADYE.
88. CLERK SAUNDERS.

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80. I am passing loath to deprive Scotland of the least remnant of her Song; but this appears to me to be nothing else than a fragment of the English ballad entitled *The Famous Flower of Serving Men: or, the Lady turn'd Serving Man.*

81. Versions of it occur under the title of *Johnie of Cockielaw and Cocklemuir.*

82. Buchan's *Gleanings*, and *A North Countrie Garland*, contain other versions of this popular ballad, and in this collection another set occurs. Mr. Jamieson gives a Danish ballad, *Child Dyring*, in *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities.*

83. A different version published in this collection. There are many sets of it.

84. Another copy is given in this collection.

86. A copy of this ballad, differing in a few immaterial points, I have heard, under the title of *Hynd Hemsie and May Margerie.*

87. Was published with additions and alterations in *Tales of Wonder.* Another copy, *Sweet Willie of Liddesdale*, is in Jamieson's *Ballads;* and there is a Danish ballad given in *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities, — Sir Stig and Lady Torelild,* — on the same subject.

88. Another set occurs in *Popular Ballads and Songs*, 1805. I have heard a copy, called *The Seven Bluidy Brothers*, the concluding stanza of which apparently has paved the way for the introduction of the Ghost of the slaughtered Lover, which occurs in the copies hitherto published:

"Go make to me a high high tower,
Be sure ye mak it stout and strang;
And on the top put an honour's gate,
That my love's ghost may come and gang."

89. THE DÆMON LOVER.

90. ROSE THE RED AND WHITE LILLY.

91. FAUSE FOODRAGE.

92. KEMPION.

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And so the ballad ends; but the description of Gate here, meant exclusively for the accommodation of a ghost passing out and in, I do not well comprehend. The verses now given appear, however, naturally to introduce this one in Mr. Jamieson's copy:

"When seven years were come and gane,
Lady Margaret she thought lang;
And she is up to the hichest tower,
By the lee licht o' the moon."

89. On this subject I am informed there is an English ballad, but I have not seen it. On a similar topick there is a different ballad, generally known by the title of the *Deil's Wowing*, in which the fiend conquers the maid's scruples to go with him by the all-potent charm of gold.

90. Another version, entitled *The Wedding of Robin Hood and Little John*, is in Mr. Kinloch's *Scottish Ballads*.

91. I have a copy of this ballad in which the parties interested are styled "The Eastmure king, the Westmure king, and the king of O Norie." The antiquarian will probably set down two of these gentlemen as ancestors or descendants of the king of Eastmureland and king of Westmureland mentioned in the *Complaynt of Scotland*.

92. Has been frequently printed in a different form, under the title of *The Laidley Worm of Spindelston Heugh*; "The most common version of which," says the Editor of *Kempion*, "was either entirely composed or rewritten by the Reverend Mr. Lamb of Norham." Mr. Lamb does not appear to have taken any more liberties with it than has been done by other editors of old songs who have hitherto escaped without animadversion. In this collection I have given another copy obtained from recitation, *Kemp Owayne*, which preserves in greater purity the name of the hero than any other yet published. He was, no doubt, the same Ewein, or Owain, ap Urien, the king of Reged, who is celebrated by the bards Taliessin and Llywarch-Hen, as well as in the Welch Historical Triades. In a poem of Gruffyd Llwyd, A. D. 1400, addressed to Owain Glyndwr, is the following allusion to this

93. THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL.

94. KING HENRIE.

95. PRINCE ROBERT.

96. ANNAN WATER.

97. THE CRUEL SISTER.

98. THE QUEEN'S MARIE.

99. THE BONNY HYND.

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warrior: — "Thou hast travelled by land and by sea in the conduct of thine affairs, like Owain ap Urien in days of yore, when with activity he encountered the black knight of the water." His mistress had a ring esteemed one of the thirteen rarities of Britain, which (like the wonderous ring of Gyges) would render the wearer invisible. — See notes to *The Mantle Made Amiss*, in Way's *Fabliaux*, Vol. I. In the ballad given in this collection, the lady whom he disenchants coaxes him to kiss her thrice, by successively proffering a royal belt, a royal brand, and a ring found by her in the green sea, all possessing marvellous virtues.

94. *King Henrie* was published in *Tales of Wonder*, then in Mr. Jamieson's collection, where three stanzas not printed in the *Border Minstrelsy* are to be found.

95. Another version of this is given in the present collection. I have seen a third copy, which gives two stanzas not found in either of the sets before the public:

"Lord Robert and Mary Florence,
They wer twa children ying;
They were scarce seven years of age
Till luve began to spring.

"Lord Robert loved Mary Florence,
And she lov'd him above power;
But he durst not, for his cruel mither,
Bring her intill his bower."

97. Is a ballad which appears in a multitude of shapes, and which has been parodied in England. Different versions from that published in the *Border Minstrelsy* will be found in *Popular Ballads and Songs*, also in the *Ballad Book*.

99. I notice this for the purpose of supplying some of the lacunæ which appear in it. The second line of the third stanza, instead of what it is, should be

### 100. THOMAS THE RHYMER.

The next work of merit on a similar subject with the "Border Minstrelsy" is Mr. R. Jamieson's "Popular Ballads and Songs," Edinburgh, 1806, 2 vols., 8vo. The additions which Mr. Jamieson's industry has made to the catalogue of our traditionary poetry are considerable. In the plan of his publication, he was in part anticipated by the "Border Minstrelsy"; their materials having in

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"It 's not for you a weed";

and after the third stanza, should follow this:

"He 's taen her by the milk-white hand
And softly laid her down;
And when he lifted her up again,
He gae her a silver kaim."

After the eighth stanza of the printed copy should be the mark of a part lost, which, however, could be supplied if it were necessary, and perhaps very nearly in the terms it originally stood, by the corresponding verses of another ballad, which turns upon the same incident. The last two lines of the ninth stanza should be printed thus:

"She 's soakt it in her red heart's blood,
And twin'd herself of life."

After the eleventh stanza should be inserted the following verses:

"What need ye care for your bonny hynd?
For it ye needna care;
There 's eight score hynds in yonder park,
And five score hynds to spare.

"Four score of them are siller shod,
Of these ye may get three;
But oh! and oh! for my bonny hynd
Beneath yon Hollen tree."

100. The first part is from recitation. The other two parts are supplied by the Editor. There are two ancient MSS. of Thomas's poetical vaticinations, and these have been given to the publick: one by Mr. Jamieson, in his *Popular Ballads and Songs;* and the other by Mr. Laing, in his *Select Reliques of Ancient Popular Poetry.*

a great measure been the same, and obtained from the same source, namely, Mrs. Brown of Falkland. Of ballads not in any collection published till they appeared in Mr. Jamieson's work, the following is believed to be a correct note:

101. THE TWA BROTHERS.
102. LADY MAISRY.
103. GLENKINDY.
104. THE BARON OF BRACKLEY.
105. THE LAIRD OF WARISTOUN.
106. BURD ELLEN.
107. THE TRUMPETER OF FYVIE.

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101. Another version is in this collection, and a third in Mr. Sharpe's *Ballad Book*.

102. Another version of it is in this collection; a third will be found in the *Scots Magazine*, June, 1822; and a fourth in the *North Countrie Garland*.

103. Is supposed to refer to a Welsh bard, Kirion the Sallow. Percy has another version in his *Reliques;* and Mr. Cunningham, in his *Songs of Stotland*, has chosen to melt both versions in a flux of his own, which has disfigured, and quite changed, the features of each.

104. Buchan, in his *Gleanings of Scottish Ballads*, gives a different version of this ballad. See also *The Thistle of Scotland*, and *Scarce Ancient Ballads*.

105. Another copy will be found in Kinloch's *Ballads*. An interesting memoir of the unfortunate heroine of this ballad has been edited by Mr. Sharpe. Edinburgh, 1827.

106. Is the *Child Waters* of Percy's *Reliques*. Mr. Jamieson has added some supplemental stanzas, giving the ballad a tragick ending; but all copies that I have heard recited end thus:

"Your bridal and your banqueting
Shall be both on one day";

leaving no room to infer a melancholy catastrophe. In Mr. Buchan's MS. is a capital and perfect copy.

107. The stall copy of this ballad has been given in the present collection. It is said to be the modern way of the bal-

108. WILLIE AND MAY MARGARET.
109. LORD RANDAL.
110. QUEEN JANE OF ENGLAND.
111. THE BIRTH OF ROBIN HOOD.
112. BONNY BEE-HO'M.

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lad. I am indebted to the *Gleanings of Scottish Ballads* for correcting me in supposing that the date, 1674, referred to the death of Tifties Annie. It seems, it was acted in the North Country as a drama: of these rude histrionick representations by the vulgar we have few hints: but Mr. Cunningham has recently given some information on that subject in his very eloquent essay on Scottish song, prefixed to his *Songs of Scotland*. The Editor of the *Gleanings* says, — "The unfortunate maiden's name was Annie or Agness (which are synonymous in some parts of Scotland) Smith, who died of a broken heart on the 9th January, 1631, as is to be found in a roughly cut stone, broken in many places, in the green church-yard of Fyvie." The inscription is, — "Here lyes Agness Smith, who died the 9th January, 1631." See *Thistle of Scotland*, p. 68.

108. This ballad I have not been able to get in a complete state till lately, though many fragments of different versions have been familiar to me. Mr. Cunningham mentions that there is a version where Willie's Ghost appears to his lady, and he gives some stanzas. For the supplemental verses of this ballad, see Appendix.

109. Will be found embellished and altered in the *Songs of Scotland*.

110. There is an English ballad on the same subject; see *London Collection*, 1723. Another version in Kinloch's *Ballads*, but not so perfect as can be obtained from recitation.

111. Many versions of this popular ballad are to be met with. The common stall prints are very good. Mr. Jamieson gives two different copies. The ballad refers to the father of Thomas à Becket, a circumstance not hitherto noticed. Another version is in Kinloch's *Ballads;* and a fourth in *Scarce Ancient Ballads*, Peterhead, 1819. Association recalls to my memory another ballad, relating of Eastern climes, namely, *John Thomson and the Turk*, which I believe is not published in any collection, though allusion is often made in old poets to that worthy warrior's submission to a termagant spouse. It will be found in the Appendix.

113. YOUNG BEICHAN AND SUSIE PYE.
114. BONNY BABY LIVINGSTON.
115. ALISON GROSS.
116. LADY ELSPAT.
117. LORD WA'YATES AND AULD INGRAM.

In 1808, the late Mr. Finlay, of Glasgow, published his "Scottish Historical and Romantic Ballads," in two volumes, a work of considerable merit; but which made few additions to our traditionary poetry. He gave, however, a complete set of "The Cruel Knight," under the title of "Young Johnston and the Young Colonel," and which is also known to reciters by the name of "Sweet Willie and the Young Colonel." He also furnished some considerable additions to the ballad of "Jamie Douglas," and gave, in one or two instances, different versions of some popular pieces. "The Mermaid," though Mr. Finlay considers it to be an old ballad, is certainly wholly rewritten. There are stories, sure enough, of Knights, yea, Squires of low degree, being captivated by these "Swimming Ladies," rife in every part of the country; and the only one on record who was so fortunate as to escape their embraces was a gentleman commemorated in this rhyme, given by Mr. Chambers in his late curious work: *

"Lorntie, Lorntie, wer 't na for your man,
I had gart your heart's blude skirl in my pan."

But as to the verses in Mr. Finlay's book, or those in

117. Is printed in another and complete shape in *A North Countrie Garland;* but a more perfect and beautiful version has been recovered by Mr. Buchan, and is in his MS. collection.

* *The Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1826, p. 208.

Mr. Pinkerton's, on a similar subject, being ancient, I must beg leave to remain incredulous.

The only additions these volumes give are,—

118. THE BONNIE HOUSE OF AIRLY.

119. WILLIE MACINTOSH.

An extraordinary work, under this title, comes in for a share of our attention: — "Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song; with Historical and Traditional Notes relative to the Manners and Customs of the Peasantry. Now first published by R. H. Cromek, F. A. S., Editor of 'The Reliques of Robert Burns,'" London, 1810, 2 vols., 8vo. Whether the Editor's ignorance was imposed on, or whether he knowingly connived at the deception practised on the publick, I know not; but certainly there never was, and never can be, a more barefaced attempt made to gull ignorance than what this work exhibits. It professes to give, as ancient ballads and songs, things which must have been written under the nose of its Editor. It alters or disguises others, and says these interpolated copies are the only genuine and perfect versions, and that all else is vitiated or incomplete. More pretension, downright impudence, and literary falsehood seldom or never come into conjunction. It has not one single ancient ballad within its four corners, excepting a portion of "Gil Brenton," which is inlaid in a frame of modern imitation, and a

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118. From a stall copy, printed about thirty years ago, and two recited copies, Mr. F. gives this version. Other editions of it are very common. One is in the *Ballad Book*.

119. This fragment relates to the burning of Auchindown, in 1592. Some additional stanzas are given in Laing's *Thistle of Scotland*, p. 106.

stanza or two of "Hynd Henry and May Margerie," a story similar to that of "Jellon Graeme." Regarding the parties employed, and their manner of getting up this work, some additional information can be had by consulting M'Taggart's "Gallovidian Dictionary," if any dependence can be placed on that printed mass of mingled sense and absurdity.

Thomas Evans's "Collection of Old Ballads," originally published in 1777, in two volumes; afterwards enlarged and republished in 1784, in four volumes, was latterly remodelled and revised by his son, R. H. Evans, under whose care a new edition came forth in 1810. The sources from which the materials of these volumes were chiefly obtained its editor states to have been the Pepysian and Roxburgh collections. The only ballads which relate to our present object in this publication are the

120. MEMORABLES OF THE MONTGOMERIES.

121. THE BATTLE OF CORICHIE.

In 1814, a valuable work,* to which we have often had

120. Said to be reprinted from a pamphlet published at Glasgow, 1770, 4to., by R. & A. Foulis, and there said to be printed "from the only copy known to remain, which had been preserved above sixty years, by the care of Hugh Montgomerie, senior, at Eaglesham, long one of the factors of the family of Eglintoun." It consists of thirty-four stanzas, and, however flattering it may be to family pride, it has nothing to interest the general reader. It smacks very much of the luminous compositions which occasionally drop from the pens of country schoolmasters and parish clerks, when, laying aside their birken wands, they betake them to more intellectual sources of enjoyment.

121. Said to be written by one Forbes, a schoolmaster on Deeside.

* "Illustrations of Northern Antiquities, from the earlier Teutonic and Scandinavian Romances: being an Abstract of the

occasion to refer, was published at Edinburgh, the joint labour of three eminent scholars, Henry Weber, Robert Jamieson, and Sir Walter Scott. The department of the volume undertaken by Mr. Jamieson, being "Popular, Heroic, and Romantic Ballads, translated from the Northern Languages," establishes the singular coincidence which exists betwixt the ballads of Scotland and those of Denmark and Sweden, not only in their incidents, but also in those characteristick peculiarities of phraseology and expression which distinguish our Traditionary songs. To those fond of tracing the obvious connection thus existing in the traditions and popular poetry of countries long separated from each other the writings of Mr. Jamieson must ever prove "both pleasing and profitable"; and there are few who know any thing of the subject on which he has bestowed so much attention and reflected so much light, but will readily subscribe to almost every one of the philosophick and ingenious views he has so well expressed in the dissertation which precedes his masterly translations. To point out some of the striking resemblances between the Scottish and Scandinavian ballad, it is only necessary to refer the reader to the translation of "Skiœn Anna," given in "Popular Ballads," for comparison with the ballad of "Fair Annie," founded on the same incidents; — to the ballads of "Young Child Dyring," page 335 of the work now noticed, and "Katharine Janfarie," of the "Minstrelsy of the Border"; — to "Ingefred and Gudrune," page 340, the subject of which is the same with that of "Cospatrick,"

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*Book of Heroes* and *Nibelungen Lay;* with Translations of Metrical Tales, from the old German, Danish, Swedish, and Icelandic Languages." Edinburgh, 1814, 4to.

"Bothwell," or "Gil Brenton"; but there is an unedited ballad in Scotland, which is a nearer approximation to the Danish Song, inasmuch as the substitution of the maiden sister for the real bride constitutes a prominent feature of the tale; — to "Ribolt and Guldborg," page 317, whose affinity to the "Child of Elle," "Erlinton," and "The Douglas Tragedy," cannot be mistaken; — to "Sir Stig and Lady Torelild," page 344, which resembles "Willie's Ladye," in the "Border Minstrelsy"; — to "Sir Wal and Lisa Lyle," "Fair Midel and Kirsten Lyle," which ballads find a counterpart in a Scottish ballad, called "Leisome Brand" (not edited), though their catastrophes differ. In the Scottish ballad, after the lady and her child die, the mother of Leisome Brand gives her sorrowing son a phial containing three drops of Peter's blood, two of which let fall on the one, and the third on the other, have the effect of restoring both lady and child to life. Others of the ballads translated from the Danish have parallels in Scotland; but this would lead into a field of inquiry too extensive. This work has now been noticed, principally because it preserves an interesting relick of ancient Scottish Song, entitled

122. CHILD RONALD AND FAIR BURD HELEN,

a legend still current in the nursery.

"A Collection of Ancient and Modern Scottish Ballads, Tales, and Songs, with Explanatory Notes and Observations, by John Gilchrist. Edinburgh, 1815." This is a sensible and judicious selection, in two volumes, compiled from works already noticed.

"The British Minstrel, a Selection of Ballads, Ancient and Modern; with Notes, Biographical and Critical, by John Struthers, Author of 'The Poor Man's Sabbath,' Glas-

gow, 1821," 2 vols., 12mo. In his preface, the Editor has favoured the world with a few of his own opinions on old ballads and their authors, neither very remarkable for novelty nor truth, and conceived in any thing but good taste. This work does not profess to make any addition to our list of traditionary ballads; but at p. xxv. of the preface, for the purpose of illustrating some observation, the Editor gives the following ballad, which is of some antiquity, and of considerable popularity:

123. THE WYLIE WIFE OF THE HIE TOWN HIE.

"Select Remains of the Ancient Popular Poetry of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1824," 4to. This interesting and curious volume, edited with singular judgment and fidelity by my friend, Mr. Laing, contains three pieces, that may be classed along with the compositions now engaging our attention. They are,—

124. ANE BALLAT OF THE NINE NOBLES.

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123. The first lacuna in Mr. S.'s copy may be supplied by a stanza of frequent occurrence in all ballads recording the mishaps of bonnie lasses, and which need not be repeated. The last break in his copy is thus supplied by a recited version:

"Aye she sat, and aye she grat,
And kaim'd her yellow hair;
And aye she curs'd the hostler's wife,
That wysit her in at the door."

And after the stanza which concludes Mr. S.'s copy follows,

"Aye she sat, and aye she sang,
And kaim'd her yellow hair;
And aye she bless'd the hostler's wife,
That wysit her in at the door."

So short-sighted are we poor mortals, that what at one time we deem the direst mishap which could befall us, we afterwards welcome as our best boon.

124. "Occurs," says Mr. Laing, "at the end of the large and splendid copy of Fordun's *Chronicle*, in the University library

125. DEFENCE OF THE SCOTS.

126. THE BLUDY SERK.

"Scarce Ancient Ballads, many never before published, Aberdeen, 1822," a thin duodecimo, contains a ballad till then unknown to our collections, entitled

127. THE HIRE MAN CHIEL.

"The Scottish Minstrel, a Selection from the Vocal Melodies of Scotland, Ancient and Modern, arranged for the Piano-Forte, by R. A. Smith," in six volumes, the last of which was published in 1824, a work valuable for the many original pieces of musick contributed by the distinguished composer who superintended its progress through the press, contains in its fourth volume, published in 1822, the following ballad, namely:

128. GLENLOGIE.

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of Edinburgh, and is written in the same hand with the rest of the manuscript." The nine nobles commemorated in this ballad are Hector, Alexander, Cæsar, Joshua, David, Judas Machabeus, Arthus, Charlemagne, Godfrey of Bullogne, and Robert the Brus.

125. The lines entitled *The Duik of Orlyance, in Defence of the Scots*, are "transcribed from the Maitland collection of Scottish poetry, deposited in the Pepysian library, Cambridge, and are nearly an extract, with some occasional variations, from Andrew of Wintown's *Chronicle*."— *Laing*.

126. Is from the pen of Robert Henryson, a Scottish Poet of considerable celebrity, who lived about the latter part of the fifteenth century. Its subject is taken from the *Gesta Romanorum*.

128. Another version is given in Mr. Sharpe's *Ballad Book*, Edinburgh, 1824, and two years afterwards it appeared in *The Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, with this announcement: — "We subjoin a ballad *never before* published, in which they are styled gay (the writer is speaking of the Gordons), and in which a fine trait of their personal manners is preserved." p. 200. — It is said the one half of the world does not know how the other half lives, and it would seem from the above quotation

"The Thistle of Scotland; a Collection of Ancient Ballads, with Notes, by Alexander Laing, Aberdeen, 1823," contains, —

129. THE RANTIN LADDIE.

130. THE BATTLE OF ALFORD.

131. ROB ROY.

"The Common Place Book of Ancient and Modern Ballads, and Metrical Legendary Tales, an Original Selection, many never before published, Edinburgh, 1824," is noticed for the purpose of mentioning that such of its ballads as are for the first time published are all modern.

"A Ballad Book." A little fairy volume under this title was printed for *private* distribution, by its editor, C. K. Sharpe, Esq., in 1824. It contains many curious pieces, "gathered," as its address to the "Courteous Reader" declareth, "from the mouths of nurses, wet and dry, singing to their babes and sucklings, dairymaids pursuing their

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that one half of the literary population either forgets or is in happy ignorance of what its other half has written. Of the two versions, that in the *Scottish Minstrel* is the more poetical. Some unaccountable liberties are taken with the songs printed in that work, and many emendations and alterations, singularly infelicitous, nay, ridiculous and childish, have been made, proceeding, no doubt, from the scrupulous delicacy of that parliament of Gentle Ladyes to whose charge the literary department of it belonged. An index of expurgated passages would form a curious comment on these fair editors. Though decidedly hostile to all interpolation and castration of ancient song, we cannot in courtesy do battaile with such combatants.

129. This was omitted to be noticed as having first appeared in the *Museum*.

130. This is a fragment. The battle was fought July 3d, 1646.

131. The subject of this is the abduction of Jane Kay by a son of the celebrated Rob Roy.

vocation in the cow-house, and tenants' daughters while giving the Lady (as every Laird's wife was once called) a spinning day, whilom an anniversary tribute in Annandale." Besides giving different versions of a number of ballads noticed in their proper place, it presents us with the following, for the first time published in a collected shape :

132. DYSMAL.

133. GLASGOW PEGGIE.

134. FAIR MARGARET OF CRAIGNARGAT.

135. O ERROL IT 'S A BONNY PLACE.

136. RITCHIE STORIE.

A yet more slender volume appeared in the same year, edited by James Maidment, Esq., and, like the "Ballad Book," its impression was limited to thirty copies. Its title is, "A North Countrie Garland." Many of the pieces in it had never before been published. Small as is the volume, it makes considerable addition to our catalogue of ancient ballads :

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132. Is founded on the Italian story of *The Prince of Salerno's Daughter*. In some copies the lady is named "Isbel," in others, "Diamond," which approaches nearer Ghismonda than the uncouth Dysmal.

133. This song is common in stalls, under this title, or that of *The Earl of Hume*, or *The Banks of Omey;* in Kinloch's *Ballads* is another version.

134. Was a common stall ballad sixty years ago; at least, the copies I have met with are about that time. It is popular in the West Country. Mr. Sharpe's copy, taken from recitation, agrees with the printed copy. Craignargat is a promontory in the Bay of Luce.

135 and 136. Are founded on domestick history, and comparatively recent. The latter is a very common ballad; of the first, several sets have been published. See Buchan's *Gleanings*, *North Country Garland*.

137. LORD THOMAS STEWART.

138. THE BURNING OF FRENDREUGH.

139. LORD SALTON AND AUCHANACHIE.

140. BONNY JOHN SETON.

141. BURD HELEN AND YOUNG TAMLENE.

142. EPPIE MORRIE.

Mr. Peter Buchan, an industrious and successful collector of local and traditionary Song, published at Peterhead, in 1825, a modest little volume, entitled "Gleanings of Scotch, English, and Irish scarce old Ballads, chiefly Tragical and Historical, many of them connected with the Localities of Aberdeenshire, and to be found in no other Collection extant, with Explanatory Notes." A portion of the materials contained in this collection has been anticipated in the notice taken of the "North Countrie Garland." Besides a variety of curious songs and minute information relative to their localities and authors, which, however, are from their nature foreign to our present purpose, the "Gleanings" furnish these ballads not hitherto noticed, namely:

143. THE EARL OF ABOYNE.

144. LORD THOMAS OF WINSBERRY.

The end of last year (1826) saw the publication of a work long and anxiously desired by his countrymen, "The

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139. This ballad I have seen more perfect in a version recovered by P. Buchan.

140. Sir John Seton, the subject of the ballad, was killed at the battle of the Bridge of Dee, June, 1639. The ballad is also to be found in Buchan's *Gleanings*.

143 and 144. Both these ballads are very popular, and various sets of them are to be found traditionally current. The last is a common stall ballad; another version of it is in Mr. Kinloch's *Ballads*, who seeks to identify its hero with James the Fifth, when he went to France, in 1536, in quest of a wife.

Songs of Scotland," edited by Mr. Allan Cunningham. It came out prefaced with an eloquent and discursive essay, in which the genius of the poet and the discrimination of the man of taste are more apparent than the skill of the antiquarian or the labour of the collector. The announcement of this work, some years ago, had excited much interest in this part of the island, and much was expected from it. The confidence reposed in the abilities of its intended editor was unbounded. The opportunities he enjoyed, in early life, of becoming perfectly and practically acquainted with all that was truly valuable and worthy of preservation in the Oral Song of his native land, and with the manners and domestick habits of those in whose memory that song lived, were known; while the prosecution of congenial pursuits, and the eminent success with which he had himself cultivated the Lyrick Muse, insured an adequate knowledge of all that was worth selection from its stores of Written Song. Added to which, his admiration of living and departed genius, and the devout love which his writings ever breathed towards the land of his birth, were all so many guaranties that this self-imposed and self-suggested task would be diligently, faithfully, judiciously, and intrepidly discharged. Perhaps too much was expected. When it did appear, its execution came not up to the wishes of his friends; nor did it realize the sanguine hopes of those who could most competently judge of its merits.

The apology for this will be, that the work was meant to be popular; that the tastes of the many had to be consulted more than the sober approbation of the few; and above all, that special heed had to be paid to the humours

of that great market in which the principal part of the commodity was to be vended. This matter lies between the publisher and the author; and how much the latter may have been fettered and circumscribed in his plan or influenced in his views by the conditions imposed by the former, the publick has neither a right to inquire, nor perhaps any curiosity to know. But even in a work meant exclusively for the gross body of mere song-readers, its popularity could in no ways be injured by minute correctness in the information it had to communicate, nor its value deteriorated by its contents being faithful transcripts of the originals whence they were derived.

It was not, however, a mere book-making speculation, or a good vendible article, which Scotland was prepared to welcome from the pen of one of her gifted and patriotick sons; but a standard collection of all that time and early associations had hallowed as her Lyrick Songs. She deemed that one whose own compositions teemed with passion, feeling, and creative power would love and venerate, with the enthusiasm known but to the noble and generous heart, the writings of a kindred spirit, however obscure or however nameless, — that he would be the last in the world to dishonour these by altering their form, — that form on which the master hand that moulded them had impressed his seal, and in which they had first received currency among the admirers of song. Nor did it ever occur that the celebrity these compositions had obtained would be sapped, and the spot they occupied in the affections and memories of the people be supplanted, by their editor substituting his own compositions in their place, decorated with their names, and built upon their sentiments and

incident. To his pious care had been willingly consigned the sacred duty of gathering, as it were, the sacred and unurned ashes of departed and of anonymous genius, and of placing these in a shrine at which posterity might bend the knee, without any of those misgivings regarding the genuineness of the reliques it contained which paralyze the devotion of the heart. Never, however, was it contemplated that these reliques should be made part and parcel of what the collector should find himself in the vein of fabricating in a similar style; nor was it asked of him to repair the devastations time and accident had wrought on these, with any interpolation, amendment, or addition, however appropriate, well imagined, or cleverly executed. It is an unholy and abhorrent lust which thus ransacks the tomb, and rifles the calm beauty of the mute and unresisting dead; and it is a most irreverent jest to tear away the ancient cerements in which they were swathed, for the purpose of tricking them forth in the gairish holyday garments of the living and the walking flesh; and yet this monstrous passion hath filled the soul of the Editor of "The Songs of Scotland," and this heartless, tasteless and impious jest glares frightfully in many a corner of his four volumes. While thus violating ancient song, he seems to have been well aware of the heinousness of his offending. He might shudder and sicken at his revolting task indeed! To soothe his own alarmed conscience, and, if possible, to reconcile the mind of his readers to his wholesale mode of hacking, and hewing, and breaking the joints of ancient and traditionary song, and to induce them to receive with favour the conjectural emendations it likes him to make, he in the course of his

progress not unfrequently chooses to sneer at those, and to underrate their labours, who have used their best endeavours to preserve ancient song in its primitive and uncontaminated form. Thus, the late Joseph Ritson comes in for a share of his odium; — the shade of that antiquary was a scarecrow to his imagination. He feared the iron hand of the critick would reach him from the grave, and pound his fabrications into dust.

To revive gross ribaldry and witty obscenity would be the last wish of any well-conditioned mind, though much which comes under that sweeping denomination in a sanctimonious, formal, and puritanical age has no claim to such a distinction. But to engraft on some ancient loose ditty a modern composition, which, so far as words go, offers no outrage to the delicately sensitive ear, but in its spirit and covert allusion smacks of the elder devil which it has supplanted, and, under a veil of snowy whiteness, dallies with wantonness in clean, nice, and well-picked phrase, is positively doing more substantial harm to sound morality, than ever its rude prototype, in the unvarnished grossness of its strains, could, under any circumstances, have effected. Songs are sung, yea, sweet, delicate, prim-lipped songs are warbled, by the most fastidious sticklers for purity of sentiment and language, everywhere and every day, breathing of more vicious and decided immorality and lax principle than ever the most licentious and outspoken lyricks of our fathers can have pretensions to. When a song is inimical to virtue, and unfit to be heard by modest ears, let it utterly perish without a sigh, and above all, and for any sake, without a comment. To give part and withhold part, while that

which is withheld furnishes the scrupulous editor with subject for some smart and sly note, only provokes curiosity, and becomes the sure means of perpetuating what otherwise would have soon, and of itself, slid silently into oblivion.

The faults of Mr. Cunningham as an editor have been alluded to generally: to have condescended on particular instances to prove each charge thus freely and unhesitatingly urged against him would have savoured of vindictive officiousness. Even as it is, what has been said may look too harsh; but an honest opinion is worth hearing in an age by far too mealy-mouthed and complimentary for the interests of wholesome learning. When a second edition of his work is called for, it is sincerely to be hoped that the alloy which has injured the beauty and value of the first will be carefully left out.

To our collection of ancient ballads it does not, as I had reason to hope it would do, supply any additions. Nor are there any interesting but different versions given of ballads already known, which can be depended on as genuine. It is true, there is no ballad printed in these volumes (with two or three memorable exceptions) exactly as it is to be found in previous collections; and it is also true that the Editor sometimes states that he is indebted for these variations to traditionary copies which he remembers himself, or has recovered; but these are words of course, a kind of professional fiction, which the reader may or may not believe, just in proportion to the amount of his own knowledge regarding the subject of which his author treats.

Very opposite to Mr. Cunningham's mode of editing

early songs is that of the compiler of "Ancient Scottish Ballads," an octavo volume, which appeared at Edinburgh in the beginning of this year. In it the Editor, Mr. Kinloch, has judiciously abstained from all conjectural emendations, and presented to the publick, in the shape he received them, a considerable number of traditionary ballads, principally obtained from recitation in the northern shires. Additional value is given to the volume by its containing the airs to which several of its pieces are chaunted. It appears to me, however, that some of these must have been incorrectly noted. Consistent with our plan, the following are the additions which this volume makes to our list of Ancient Ballads:

145. LORD LOVEL.

146. BONNIE ANNIE.

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146. I am inclined to think this is an Irish ballad, though popular in Scotland. Its Editor has hazarded a note to explain what happens to be a corruption in the text. It is on the line,—

"He made his love a coffin *off the Goats of Yarrow*."

"*Goats*," he says, "signifies inlets where the sea enters"; but in what part of Scotland he found this signification for a term usually applied to a ditch or drain is more than I can fathom. We know that by reference to other languages such a meaning may be made out; but, as the word has been substituted by the mistake of the reciter, it is not worth while to make it matter of controversy. A copy of the ballad, in my hands, corrects the error in Mr. K.'s version:

"'Make my love a coffin of the gowd sae yellow,
Whare the wood it is dear and the planks they are narrow,
And bury my love on the high banks of Yarrow.'
Sing fal lal.

"They made his love a coffin of the gowd sae yellow,
They made his love a coffin of the gowd sae yellow,
And they buried her deep on the high banks of Yarrow.
Sing fal lal, de deedle, fal lal, de deedle lair, Oh a Day!"

147. THE DUKE OF ATHOL'S NOURICE.

148. ELFIN KNICHT.

149. THE LAIRD OF DRUM.

150. JOCK O' HAZLEGREEN.

151. HYNDE ETIN.

Following out the chronological order adopted at the beginning of these short notices, I am now brought to the present work,* which, besides giving a number of different

147. Not a complete copy. In Buchan's MS. there is, however, a perfect version.

148. This is a traditionary version of the ballad under the same title in the Pepysian collection. See Appendix. Another version was published by David Webster, Edinburgh, in a projected work which has reached no farther than the first number; the only thing remarkable in which is, that the Editor states he gives it from the recitation of two *ladies*, one of whom is his own mother, and the other an honest fishwife of Musselburgh.

150. Is an imperfect copy of the old ballad on which Sir Walter Scott founded his beautiful and popular song of the same name.

151. Of this ballad Mr. Buchan has recovered a much fuller copy, before alluded to.

* It may here be mentioned, in order to obviate an apparent inconsistency, that this work was published in detached parts, at considerable intervals of time; so that, before it was wholly completed, other works appeared, containing different versions of some ballads here stated as first printed in this work. Thus, the three first mentioned ballads, at least different sets of them, occur, also, in works already noticed: *Hynd Horn* and *The Bonnie Banks o' Fordie*, under the title of *The Duke of Perth's Three Daughters*, will be found in Mr. Kinloch's *Ancient Scottish Ballads;* and *Johnie Scot*, under the title of *Johnie Buneftan*, occurs in the same collection, as well as in the *Gleanings*, where it appears under the title of *Lord John;* though, in point of fact, the versions given here were published of a prior date to those in the works alluded to. *Johnie Scot* is *Jack the Little Scot*, mentioned by Ritson as being a ballad in a MS. collection of John Frazer Tytler, Esq. The epithet *little* appears to have been given him derisively; for in a

versions of known ballads, and completing others which were imperfectly recovered by former editors, has made these additions to our traditionary literature:

152. HYND HORN.

153. THE BONNIE BANKS O' FORDIE.

154. JOHNIE SCOT.

155. BONNIE SUSIE CLELAND.

156. THE WEARY COBLE O' CARGILL.

157. CHILD NORYCE.

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copy of the same ballad, in Mr. Buchan's MS., he appears to have been a man of prodigious stature. The title of that copy is *Lang Johnie Moir*. The following passage, illustrative of the famous feat of arms accomplished by Johnie Scot, was kindly pointed out to me by Mr. Sharpe: — James Macgill, of Lindores, having killed Sir Robert Balfour, of Denmiln, in a duel, "immediately went up to London in order to procure his pardon, which, it seems, the King (Charles the Second) offered to grant him, upon condition of his fighting an Italian gladiator, or bravo, or, as he was called, a bully, which, it is said, none could be found to do. Accordingly, a large stage was erected for the exhibition before the King and court. Sir James, it is said, stood on the defensive till the bully had spent himself a little; being a taller man than Sir James, in his mighty gasconading and bravadoing, he actually leapt over the knight as if he would swallow him alive; but, in attempting to do this a second time, Sir James ran his sword up through him, and then called out, 'I have spitted him, let them roast him who will.' This not only procured his pardon, but he was also knighted on the spot." — Small's *Account of Roman Antiquities recently discovered in Fife*, p. 217. The strange name, *Babylon*, in *The Banks o' Fordie*, I believe, is a corruption of *Babe Alone*, similar to *Burd Alane*, which frequently occurs in ballads.

155. Though the lady's name and sirname are specially mentioned by the Minstrel annalist, I have been unable to trace this ballad to any historical source. In its subject it resembles *Lady Maisry*. In Italian romance it is mentioned, that ladies guilty of incontinence were, by the laws of Scotland, doomed to the flames; but this cruel enactment has no foundation, we believe, in the criminal code of the land.

157. Of this interesting ballad I have since met with a more complete copy, under the title of *Babe Nourice*. The gloves,

158. YOUNG HASTINGS THE GROOM.
159. REEDISDALE AND WISE WILLIAM.
160. SWEET WILLIAM.
161. YOUNG BEARWELL.
162. LORD DERWENTWATER.
163. SWEET WILLIE AND LADY MARGERIE.

These ballads, such as they are, have been printed precisely in the form in which they were remembered by the several individuals who sung or recited them. It has been the studious endeavour of the present writer to avoid every thing which savoured of critical emendation. For their rude and ungainly shape no apology is necessary, nor will any be offered. They are as they were received, and that is explanation enough. If these reliques of early traditionary song are of any value, it is needless to press upon the attention of the reader how imperative the duty falls upon him who undertakes the thankless labour of their publication, of presenting them truly as they exist, and no otherwise. What their texts or forms originally were we have no means of knowing; what they are now we do know; all, then, which remains by us to be done is to transmit that knowledge unimpaired, and with rigid fidelity, to posterity. By publishing in this manner we stamp up-

"lined with the silver grey," should be printed "lined with the silver gris"; the rhyme demands this change, as well as sense, and the mention of this fur occurs frequently in our Metrical romances, as well as early poets. Chaucer's monk is described as having

"his sleeves purfiled at the hond
With gris, and that the finest in the lond."

And in Lyndsay's *Complaynt of the Papingo*, the clergy are also characterized as

"Cleikand to thame skarlot and cramosye,
With menever, martrik, *grys*, and ryche armyne."

on them all the certainty and authenticity which their shadowy and mutable nature can receive.

Though the field in which many have reaped may, by this time, be well deemed nearly bare, yet much is still left for future skill and industry to glean. Those who enjoy opportunities of recovering traditionary song will, it is to be hoped, not overlook them; for the time seems approaching, that, take the sickle who likes in hand, it will be vain to expect it can reap any thing but stubble and profitless weeds. The changes, which, within this half century, the manners and habits of our peasantry and labouring classes, with whom this song has been cherished, have undergone, are inimical to its further preservation. They have departed from the stern simplicity of their fathers, and have learned, with the paltry philosophers, political quacks, and illuminated dreamers on Economick and Moral science, to laugh at the prejudices, beliefs, and superstitions of elder times. If they could separate, or if those whose follies they ape could separate, the chaff from the wheat, it were well; but in parting with the antiquated notions of other days, they part also with their wisdom and their virtues. The stream of innovation is flooding far and wide, and ancient landmarks are fast disappearing. All this may be mighty well in the eyes of those who have no thought but for the little day which bounds their own existence; but the mind whose sympathies embrace the past and grasp at the future cannot view these changes unmoved. Contemplating the rapid decay of much that we have been accustomed to love and venerate in the manners and fireside pleasures of our country's peasantry, our feelings find no unapt echo in the words of Burn the Violer, the last, properly speaking, of our Scottish Minstrels:

"But Burn cannot his Grief asswage,
While that his Day endureth,
To see the changes of this Age,
Which fleeting Time procureth.
For many a place stands in hard case,
Where Burn was blythe beforrow,
With Homes that dwelt on Leader Side,
And Scots that dwelt in Yarrow."

To many it may appear a foolish labour, this of gathering old ballads. Were it worth while, it were easy to vindicate such pursuits, and to point out their utility; but as this exception can only be taken by the superficial thinker and the sciolist, it is of little moment to enlighten their understanding on the subject. The ignorant are happy, it is said; and sorry should we be, with any impertinent knowledge, to disturb their bliss. It was foolish in the Sirens to crack their throats with song, when the cautious Ulysses had sealed his ears with wax.

If the present writer is correct in claiming for these minstrel productions an era of high antiquity, he would contend that the melodies to which they are yet uniformly chaunted must have been coeval with their composition; and that these, therefore, are by far the oldest tunes, if tunes some of them may be called, which we now possess. Several of these chaunts have already been laid before the publick; but, like the words themselves, they have too often passed through a process of refinement which has militated against their individuality and primitive character. A few of the simple airs to which some of these old ballads are sung have been added to this volume. For noting them down, the editor has to return his grateful acknowledgments to

his friend, Mr. Andrew Blaikie, who kindly devoted much of his valuable time to this laborious task. The accuracy with which they are noted down and printed is worthy of all commendation.

While I am thus expressing my obligations for favours received, I might catalogue a host of friends who have been most unremitting in their endeavours to forward my wishes in various important matters connected with this volume. In the course of the work, I have taken occasion to mention how much I have been indebted to several distinguished individuals, for kind services rendered me, whose names now I need not again repeat; but, in closing accounts, I would prove bankrupt in gratitude, were I not to mention, with warmest thanks, my friends, Dr. Andrew Crawfurd, of Lochwinnoch, Mr. Robert Allan, of Kilbarchan, and Mr. Peter Buchan, of Peterhead, as having rendered me most essential help in procuring copies of ballads not hitherto printed, and different sets of others already edited.

If, in compiling this book, I had submitted each difficulty which occurred to myself during its progress to the consideration of writers who have already distinguished themselves in this walk of literature, and had taxed their politeness by soliciting information on every point where I found my own knowledge inadequate, it certainly would have come forth to the publick much freer of errors, and much more valuable in regard to its materials, than what it now can pretend to do. Like a parasitical plant, it would have derived fresh vigour, verdure, and beauty from each new and noble stem to which it had successively clung for existence. But, though well aware that in the book-mak-

ing fashions of the day such liberties are neither uncommon, nor are looked on as either obtrusive or strange, I remembered me that it was unseemly and unknightly to claim fellowship with veterans in arms, till there had been a poor endeavour made to win courtesy by undertaking some solitary probationary adventure, however inglorious or unsatisfactory its termination might prove. The fruit of my Errantry in an obscure path hath been this little quarto.

In parting with it, I am not blind to its many imperfections; and though to these imperfections I can half reconcile myself, as being in part caused by circumstances placed beyond my controul, they are yet of that nature which obliges me, once for all, to crave the indulgence of both the candid and the courteous reader. Conscientiously I can avow, it was from no lack of a willing heart that I have failed in rendering this volume so valuable as I could have wished. But, for these faults of omission and commission, in the words of an old writer,* "I referre me wholy to the learned correction of the wise; for wel I wote, that no treatise can alwayes be so workmanly handled, but that somewhat sometymes may fall out amisse, contrarie to the minde of the wryter, and contrarie to the expectation of the reader: wherefore, my petition to thee, Gentle Reader, is, to accept those my traveyles wyth that minde I doe offer them to thee, and to take gently that I give gladly; in so doing, I shall thinke my paynes well bestowed, and shall bee encouraged hereafter to trust more unto thy courtesie."

13*th October*, 1827.

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* Hill's *Physiognomy*, London, 1571.

# APPENDIX.

## I.

The following transcript is a literal copy from the original in the Pepysian library, Cambridge. (See Appendix to Maitland's "Poems," by Pinkerton, and Jamieson's "Ballads.")

"A Proper New Ballad, entituled The Wind hath blown my Plaid away, or, A Discourse betwixt a young Maid and the Elphin-Knight; To be sung with its own pleasant New Tune.

"The Elphin Knight sits on yon hill,
Ba, ba, ba, lilli ba,
He blowes his horn both loud and shril.
The wind hath blown my plaid awa.
He blowes it East, he blowes it West,
Ba, ba, &c.
He blowes it where he lyketh best.
The wind, &c.
I wish that horn were in my kist,
Ba, ba, &c.
Yea, and the Knight in my armes two.
The wind, &c.
She had no sooner these words said,
Ba, ba, &c.

When that the Knight came to her bed.
The wind, &c.
Thou art over young a maid, quoth he,
Ba, ba, &c.
Married with me thou il wouldst be.
The wind, &c.
I have a sister younger than I,
Ba, ba, &c.
And she was married yesterday.
The wind, &c.
Married with me if thou wouldst be,
Ba, ba, &c.
A courtesie thou must do to me.
The wind, &c.
For thou must shape a sark to me,
Ba, ba, &c.
Without any cut or heme, quoth he.
The wind, &c.
Thou must shape it needle and sheerlesse,
Ba, ba, &c.
And also sue it needle threedlesse.
The wind, &c.
If that piece of courtesie I do to thee,
Ba, ba, &c.
Another thou must do to me.
The wind, &c.
I have an aiker of good ley-land,
Ba, ba, &c.
Which lyeth low by yon sea-strand.
The wind, &c.
For thou must cure it with thy horn,
Ba, ba, &c.
So thou must sow it with thy corn.
The wind, &c.

And bigg a cart of stone and lyme,
  Ba, ba, &c.
Robin Redbreast he must trail it hame.
  The wind, &c.
Thou must barn it in a mouse-holl,
  Ba, ba, &c.
And thrash it into thy shoes' soll.
  The wind, &c.
And thou must winnow it in thy looff,
  Ba, ba, &c.
And also seck it in thy glove.
  The wind, &c.
For thou must bring it over the sea,
  Ba, ba, &c.
And thou must bring it dry home to me.
  The wind, &c.
When thou hast gotten thy turns well done,
  Ba, ba, &c.
Then come to me and get thy sark then.
  The wind, &c.
I 'l not quite my plaid for my life,
  Ba, ba, &c.
It haps my seven bairns and my wife.
  The wind shall not blow my plaid awa.
My maidenhead I 'l then keep still,
  Ba, ba, &c.
Let the Elphin Knight do what he will.
  The wind 's not blown my plaid awa.
My plaid awa, my plaid awa,
  And o'er the hill and far awa,
And far awa, to Norrowa,
  My plaid shall not be blown awa."

### II. WILLIE AND MARGARET.

Between the version from which the following stanzas are taken, and that given by Mr. Jamieson, reprinted in this work, there are a few but unimportant variations. It supplies the deficiencies of Mr. Jamieson's copy, and commences with this verse immediately before the opening one of his:

"Willie stands in his stable door,
And clapping at his steed,
And looking ower his white fingers,
His nose began to bleed."

When Willie is refused admittance at his love's bower, the ballad continues:

"'O fare ye weel, my fause Margaret,
O fare ye weel and adieu;
I 've gotten my mother's malison
This night coming to you.'
As he rode ower yon hie hie hill,
And down yon dowie den,
The roar that was in Clyde's water
Would fear'd a hundred men.
When he came to Clyde's water,
'T was flowing ower the brim;
The rushing that was in Clyde's water
Took Willie's cane frae him.
He leaned him ower his saddle bow,
To catch his cane again;
The rushing that was in Clyde's water
Took Willie's hat frae him.
He leaned him ower his saddle bow,
To catch his hat thro force;

The rushing that was in Clyde's water
Took Willie frae his horse.
His brother stood upon the bank,
Says, 'Fye, man, will ye drown?
Ye 'll turn ye to your high horse head,
And learn ye how to soom.'
'How can I turn to my high horse head,
And learn me how to soom?
I 've gotten my mother's malison,
It 's here that I maun drown.'
The very hour the young man sank
Into the pot sae deep,
Up it waken'd her, May Margret,
Out of her drowsy sleep.
'Come here, come here, my mother dear,
And read this dreary dream;
I dreamed my love was at our yetts,
And nane wuld let him in.'
'Lye still, lye still, now, May Margret,
Lye still, and tak your rest;
Syn your true love was at your yetts,
It 's but twa quarters past.'
Nimbly, nimbly raise she up,
And nimbly put she on;
And the higher that the lady cried,
The louder blew the win'.
The firsten step that she stepped,
She stepped to the cuit;—
'Ohone, alace!' said that ladie,
'This water 's wondrous deep.'
The neisten step that she wade in,
She waded till the knee;
Says she, 'I would wade farther in,
Gin I my love could see.'

The neisten step that she wade in,
She waded to the chin;
The deepest pot in Clyde's water
She got sweet Willie in.
'You 've had a cruel mother, Willie,
And I have had anither;
But we shall sleep in Clyde's water,
Like sister and like brither!' "

III. LORD JAMIE DOUGLAS.

O waly waly up the bank,
And waly waly down the brae,
And waly waly by yon burn side,
Where me and my lord was wont to gae.
Hey Nonny nonnie but love is bonnie,
A little while when it is new;
But when love grows auld it grows mair cauld,
And fades away like the morning dew.
I lean'd my back against an aik,
I thocht it was a trustie tree;
But first it bowed and syne it break,
And sae did my fause luve to me.
My mother tauld me, when I was young,
That young man's love was ill to trow;
But untill her I would give nae ear,
And alace my ain wand dings me now!
O wherefore need I busk my head?
Or wherefore should I kaim my hair?
For my good lord has me forsook,
And says he 'll never love me mair.

Gin I had wist or I had kisst
That young man's love was sae ill to win,
I would hae lockt my hert wi' a key o' gowd,
And pinn'd it wi' a siller pin.
An I had kent what I ken now,
I 'd never crosst the water Tay,
But stayed still at Athole's gates,
He would have made me his lady gay.
When lords and lairds cam to this toun,
And gentlemen o' a high degree,
I took my auld son in my arms,
And went to my chamber pleasantlie.
But when lords and lairds cam through this toun,
And gentlemen o' a high degree,
I must sit alane intill the dark,
And the babie on the nurse's knee.
I had a nurse and she was fair,
She was a dearly nurse to me;
She took my gay lord frae my side,
And used him in her companie.
Awa, awa, thou fause Blackwood,
Aye, and an ill death may thou die;
Thou wert the first and occasion last
Of parting my gay lord and me.
When I lay sick and very sick,
Sick I was and like to die,
A gentleman, a friend of mine,
He came on purpose to visit me;
But Blackwood whisper'd in my lord's ear
He was ower lang in chamber with me.
When I was sick and very sick,
Sick I was and like to die,
I drew me near to my stairhead,
And I heard my ain lord lichtly me.

Come down, come down, O Jamie Douglas,
And drink the orange wine with me;
I 'll set thee on a chair of gold,
And daut thee kindly on my knee.
When sea and sand turn far inland,
And mussels grow on ilka tree,
When cockle shells turn siller bells,
I 'll drink the orange wine wi' thee.
What ails you at our youngest son,
That sits upon the nurse's knee?
I 'm sure he 's never done any harm,
An it 's not to his ain nurse and me.
If I had kent what I ken now,
That love it was sae ill to win,
I should ne'er hae wet my cherry cheek
For onie man or woman's son.
When my father came to hear
That my gay lord had forsaken me,
He sent five score of his soldiers bright
To take me safe to my ain countrie.
Up in the mornin' when I arose,
My bonnie palace for to lea',
I whispered in at my lord's window,
But the never a word he would answer me.
Fare ye weel, then, Jamie Douglas,
I need care as little as ye care for me;
The Earl of Mar is my father dear,
And I soon will see my ain countrie.
Ye thought that I was like yoursell,
And loving ilk ane I did see;
But here I swear by the heavens clear,
I never loved a man but thee.
Slowly slowly rose I up,
And slowly slowly I cam down;

And when he saw me sit in my coach,
He made his drums and trumpets sound.
When I into my coach was set,
My tenants all were with me tane;
They set them down upon their knees,
And they begg'd me to come back again.
It 's fare ye weel, my bonnie palace;
And fare ye weel, my children three:
God grant your father may get mair grace,
And love thee better than he has done me.
It 's fare ye weel, my servants all;
And you, my bonnie children three:
God grant your father grace to be kind
Till I see you safe in my ain countrie.
But wae be to you, fause Blackwood,
Aye, and ill death may you die;
Ye are the first, and I hope the last,
That put strife between my good lord and me.
When I came in through Edinburgh town,
My loving father came to meet me,
With trumpets sounding on every side;
But it was no comfort at all to me:
For no mirth nor music sounds in my ear,
Since the Earl of March has forsaken me.
" Hold your tongue, my daughter dear,
And of your weeping pray let abee;
For I 'll send to him a bill of divorce,
And I 'll get as good a lord to thee."
" Hold your tongue, my father dear,
And of your scoffing pray let abee;
I would rather hae a kiss of my ain lord's mouth
As all the lords in the north countrie."
When she came to her father's land,
The tenants a' cam her to see;

Never a word she could speak to them,
  But the buttons aff her clothes did flee.
The linnet is a bonnie bird,
  And aften flees far frae its nest;
So all the world may plainly see
  They 're far awa that I love best!
She looked out at her father's window,
  To take a view of the countrie;
Who did she see but Jamie Douglas,
  And along with him her children three.
There came a soldier to the gate,
  And he did knock right hastilie:
"If Lady Douglas be within,
  Bid her come down and speak to me.
O come away, my lady fair,
  Come away, now, alang with me:
For I have hanged fause Blackwood
  At the very place where he told the lie."

IV. JOHN THOMSON AND THE TURK.

This curious ballad is of respectable antiquity. Dunbar has written a piece entitled, "Prayer that the King war John Thomsoun's man," the fourth line of each stanza being "God, gif ye war John Thomsoun's man!" In his note on this poem, Mr. Pinkerton says: — "This is a proverbial expression, meaning a hen-pecked husband. I have little doubt but the original proverb was *Joan* Thomson's man; *man*, in Scotland, signifies either *husband* or *servant*." Pinkerton was ignorant of the existence of the ballad: had he been acquainted with it, he would have saved himself the trouble of writing a foolish conjecture. Colville, in his

"Whig's Supplication, or the Scotch Hudibras," alludes twice to John Thomson:

"We read in greatest warriors' lives,
They oft were ruled by their wives, &c.
And so the imperious Roxalan
Made the great Turk Johne Thomson's man."

Again,

"And these, we ken,
Have ever been John Thomson's men;
That is, still ruled by their wives."

Pennicuik, in his "Linton Address to the Prince of Orange," also alludes to the proverbial expression, —

"Our *Lintoun* Wives shall blaw the coal,
And Women here, as weel we ken,
Would have Us all *John Thomson's* men."

Two or three stanzas of the ballad were known to Dr. Leyden when he published his edition of the "Complaynt of Scotland." These he has given in the glossary appended to that work.

In Kelly's "Proverbs," London, 1721, there is this notice of the proverb, — "Better be John Thomson's man than Ringan Dinn's or John Knox's"; and Kelly gives this gloss, — "John Thomson's man is he that is complaisant to his wife's humours, Ringan Dinn's is he whom his wife scolds, John Knox's is he whom his wife beats." In the West Country, my friend, Mr. A. Crawfurd, informs me, that, when a company are sitting together sociably, and a neighbour drops in, it is usual to welcome him thus: — "Come awa, we 're a' John Tamson's bairns."

There is a song about John Tamson's wallet; but whether this was the Palmer's scrip, which the hero of the ballad

must have borne, I know not. All that I have heard concerning the wallet is contained in these two verses:

"John Tamson's wallet frae end to end,
John Tamson's wallet frae end to end;
And what was in 't ye fain would ken,
Whigmaleeries for women and men.

About his wallet there was a dispute,
Some said it was made o' the skin o' a brute,
But I believe it 's made o' the best o' bend,
John Tamson's wallet frae end to end."

There is a nursery rhyme which runs thus:

"John Tamson and his man
To the town ran;
They bought and they sold
And the penny down told.
The kirk was ane,
The quire was twa;
They gied a skelp,
And cam awa."

And this exhausts all I know respecting this worthy warrior.

JOHN THOMSON AND THE TURK.

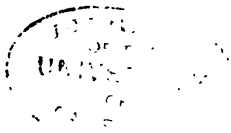
John Thomson fought against the Turks
Three years, intill a far countrie;
And all that time, and something mair,
Was absent from his gay ladie.
But it fell ance upon a time,
As this young chieftain sat alane,
He spied his lady in rich array,
As she walk'd ower a rural plain.

"What brought ye here, my lady gay,
So far awa from your ain countrie?
I 've thought lang, and very lang,
And all for your fair face to see."
For some days she did with him stay,
Till it fell ance upon a day,
"Fareweel, for a time," she said,
"For now I must boun hame away."
He 's gi'en to her a jewel fine,
Was set with pearl and precious stane;
Says, "My love, beware of these savages bold
That 's in your way as ye gang hame.
Ye 'll tak the road, my lady fair,
That leads you fair across the lea:
That keeps you from wild Hind Soldan,
And likewise from base Violentrie."
Wi' heavy heart thir twa did pairt,
She mintet as she wuld gae hame;
Hind Soldan by the Greeks was slain,
But to base Violentrie she 's gane.
When a twelvemonth had expired,
John Thomson he thought wondrous lang,
And he has written a braid letter,
And sealed it weel wi' his ain hand.
He sent it with a small vessel
That there was quickly gaun to sea;
And sent it on to fair Scotland,
To see about his gay ladie.
But the answer he received again, —
The lines did grieve his heart right sair:
Nane of her friends there had her seen,
For a twelvemonth and something mair.
Then he put on a Palmer's weed,
And took a pike-staff in his hand:

To Violentrie's castell he hied;
But slowly, slowly he did gang.
When within the hall he came,
He jooked and couch'd out ower his tree:
"If ye be lady of this hall,
Some of your good bountith gie me."
"What news, what news, Palmer," she said,
"And from what countrie cam ye?"
"I 'm lately come from Grecian plains,
Where lies some of the Scots armie."
"If ye be come from Grecian plains,
Some mair news I will ask of thee,—
Of one of the chieftains that lies there,
If he has lately seen his gay ladie."
"It is twa months, and something mair,
Since we did pairt on yonder plain;
And now this knight has began to fear
One of his foes he has her ta'en."
"He has not ta'en me by force nor slight,
It was a' by my ain free will;
He may tarry into the fight,
For here I mean to tarry still.
And if John Thomson ye do see,
Tell him I wish him silent sleep;
His head was not so coziely,
Nor yet sae weel, as lies at my feet."
With that he threw aff his strange disguise,
Laid by the mask that he had on;
Said, "Hide me now, my lady fair,
For Violentrie will soon be hame."
"For the love I bore thee ance,
I 'll strive to hide you, if I can."
Then she put him down in a dark cellar
Where there lay many a new slain man.

But he hadna in the cellar been,
Not an hour but barely three,
Then hideous was the noise he heard,
When in at the gate cam Violentrie.
Says, "I wish you well, my lady fair,
It 's time for us to sit to dine;
Come, serve me with the good white bread,
And likewise with the claret wine.
That Scots chieftain, our mortal fae,
Sae aft frae field has made us flee,
Ten thousand zechins this day I 'll give
That I his face could only see."
"Of that same gift wuld ye give me,
If I wuld bring him unto thee?
I fairly hold you at your word; —
Come ben John Thomson to my lord."
Then from the vault John Thomson came,
Wringing his hands most piteouslie:
"What would ye do," the Turk he cried,
"If ye had me as I hae thee?"
"If I had you as ye have me,
I 'll tell ye what I 'd do to thee;
I 'd hang you up in good greenwood,
And cause your ain hand wale the tree.
I meant to stick you with my knife
For kissing my beloved ladie" —
"But that same weed ye 've shaped for me,
It quickly shall be sewed for thee."
Then to the wood they baith are gane;
John Thomson clamb frae tree to tree;
And aye he sighed and said, "Och hone,
Here comes the day that I must die."
He tied a ribbon on every branch,
Put up a flag his men might see;

But little did his false foes ken
He meant them any injurie.
He set his horn unto his mouth,
And he has blawn baith loud and schill:
And then three thousand armed men
Cam tripping all out ower the hill.
"Deliver us our chief," they all did cry,
"It 's by our hand that ye must die."
"Here is your chief," the Turk replied,
With that fell on his bended knee.
"O mercy, mercy, good fellows all,
Mercy I pray you 'll grant to me."
"Such mercy as ye meant to give,
Such mercy we shall give to thee."
This Turk they in his castel burnt,
That stood upon yon hill so hie;
John Thomson's gay ladie they took
And hanged her on yon greenwood tree!



# MINSTRELSY,

## ANCIENT AND MODERN.

### EARL MARSHALL.

This excellent and highly humorous ballad is printed in the second volume of Percy's "Reliques," under the title of "Queen Eleanor's Confession." The present version has been recovered from recitation; and though it differs but little from that given in the "Reliques," it is presumed, on the whole, to be more correct and spirited. The learned Editor of the work referred to justly observes that the ballad itself is entirely fabulous; for, though the gallantries of Queen Eleanor were the chief grounds of the dissolution of her marriage with Louis the Seventh of France, her conduct, in so far as fidelity to the bed of her second husband, Henry the Second of England, had concern, was quite irreproachable. The tune to which this ballad is sung will be given at the end of the work. In singing, the two last lines of each stanza are repeated.

QUEENE Eleanor was a sick woman,
And sick just like to die;
And she has sent for two fryars of France
To come to her speedilie.
And she has sent, &c.

The King called downe his nobles all,
By one, by two, by three:
"Earl Marshall, I 'll go shrive the Queene,
And thou shalt wend with mee."

"A boone, a boone," quoth Earl Marshall,
And fell on his bended knee;
"That whatsoever the Queene may say,
No harm thereof may bee."

"Oh, you 'll put on a gray fryar's gowne,
And I 'll put on another;
And we will away to fair London town,
Like fryars both together."

"O no, O no, my liege, my King,
Such things can never bee;
For if the Queene hears word of this,
Hanged she 'll cause me to bee."

"I swear by the sun, I swear by the moon,
And by the stars so hie,

And by my sceptre and my crowne,
The Earl Marshall shall not die."

The King 's put on a gray fryar's gowne,
The Earl Marshall 's put on another,
And they are away to fair London towne,
Like fryars both together.

When that they came to fair London towne,
And came into Whitehall,
The bells did ring and the quiristers sing,
And the torches did light them all.

And when they came before the Queene,
They kneeled down on their knee :
" What matter, what matter, our gracious Queene,
You 've sent so speedilie ? "

" Oh, if you are two fryars of France,
It 's you that I wished to see ;
But if you are two English lords,
You shall hang on the gallowes tree."

" Oh, we are not two English lords,
But two fryars of France we bee ;
And we sang the Song of Solomon,
As we came over the sea."

"Oh, the first vile sin I did commit,
Tell it I will to thee:
I fell in love with the Earl Marshall,
As he brought me over the sea."

"Oh, that was a great sin," quoth the King,
"But pardoned it must bee."
"Amen! Amen!" said the Earl Marshall,
With a heavie heart spake hee.

"Oh, the next sin that I did commit,
I will to you unfolde:
Earl Marshall had my virgin dower
Beneath this cloth of golde."

"Oh, that was a vile sin," said the King,
"May God forgive it thee."
"Amen! Amen!" groaned the Earl Marshall,
And a very frightened man was hee.

"Oh, the next sin that I did commit,
Tell it I will to thee:
I poisoned a lady of noble blood,
For the sake of King Henrie." *

* In the *Reliques*, this stanza runs thus:

"The next vile thing that ever I did
To you I will discover:
I poysoned fair Rosamonde,
All in fair Woodstocke bower."

"Oh, that was a great sin," said the King,
"But pardoned it shall bee."
"Amen! Amen!" said the Earl Marshall,
And still a frightened man was hee."

"Oh, the next sin that ever I did,
Tell it I will to thee:
I have kept strong poison this seven long years
To poison King Henrie."

"Oh, that was a great sin," said the King,
"But pardoned it must bee."
"Amen! Amen!" said the Earl Marshall,
And still a frightened man was hee.

"Oh, don't you see two little boys
Playing at the football?
Oh, yonder is the Earl Marshall's son,
And I like him best of all.

"Oh, don't you see yon other little boy
Playing at the football?
Oh, that one is King Henrie's son,
And I like him worst of all.

"His head is like a black bull's head, —
His feet are like a bear" ——

"What matter! what matter!" cried the King,
"He 's my son and my only heir!"

The King plucked off his fryar's gowne,
And stood in his scarlet soe red:
The Queen she turned herself in bed,
And cryed that she was betrayde.

The King lookt o'er his left shoulder,
And a grim look looked he:
"Earl Marshall," he said, "but for my oath,
Thou hadst swung on the gallowes tree."

## THE TWA CORBIES.

A SCOTTISH BALLAD.

THERE were twa corbies sat on a tree,
Large and black as black might be,
And one the other gan say,
Where shall we go and dine to-day?
Shall we go dine by the wild salt sea?
Shall we go dine 'neath the greenwood tree?

As I sat on the deep sea sand,
I saw a fair ship nigh at land;
I waved my wings, I bent my beak,
The ship sunk, and I heard a shriek:
There they lie, one, two, and three,—
I shall dine by the wild salt sea.

Come, I will show ye a sweeter sight,
A lonesome glen and a new slain knight;
His blood yet on the grass is hot,
His sword half drawn, his shafts unshot,—
And no one kens that he lies there,
But his hawk, his hound, and his lady fair.

His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild fowl hame,
His lady 's away with another mate,
So we shall make our dinner sweet;
Our dinner 's sure, our feasting free, —
Come, and dine by the greenwood tree.

Ye shall sit on his white hause-bane,
I will pick out his bonny blue een;
Ye 'll take a tress of his yellow hair,
To theak yere nest when it grows bare;
The gowden down on his young chin
Will do to sewe my young ones in.

O cauld and bare will his bed be,
When winter storms sing in the tree;
At his head a turf, at his feet a stone,
He will sleep, nor hear the maiden's moan;
O'er his white bones the birds shall fly,
The wild deer bound, and foxes cry.

## SIR PATRICK SPENS.

This ballad lays claim to a high and remote antiquity. It is supposed by Bishop Percy to be founded on some event of real history; but in what age the hero of it lived, or when the fatal expedition, which it records, happened, he confesses himself unable to determine. Sir Walter Scott and Mr. Finlay, in their respective collections, concur in assigning it a like foundation, though they disagree as to the historical incident whence it has originated; while, on the other hand, Mr. Ritson asserts that "no memorial of the subject of the ballad exists in history."*

Our limits forbid us from giving at length the historical sketches which Sir Walter Scott and Mr. Finlay have brought forward in support of their different theories; and we must refer the reader, who wishes to weigh the value of their arguments, to the works themselves. It is enough, at present, to state, that the Editor of the "Border Minstrelsy" inclines to think that the present ballad may record some unsuccessful attempt to bring home Margaret, commonly called the Maid of Norway, previous to that embassy despatched for her by the Regency of Scotland, after the death of her grandfather, Alexander the Third. And

* *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, Vol. I. *Border Minstrelsy*, Vol. I. *Scottish Historical and Romantic Ballads*, Vol. I., p. 45. *Ritson on Scottish Song*, Vol. II., p. 4.

though no account of such an expedition appears in history, it is nevertheless ingeniously contended, that its silence cannot invalidate tradition, or form any argument against the probability of such an event, — more especially when the meagre materials whence Scottish history is derived are taken into view. Mr. Finlay objects to giving the ballad, as it stands, so high a claim to antiquity, but suggests that if it be referred to the time of James the Third, who married Margaret, daughter of the king of Denmark, it would be brought a step nearer probability.

To both these opinions, however, Ritson's observation applies with overwhelming force. There is no historical evidence of this disastrous shipwreck, either in the embassy for the Maiden of Norway, or in that for the wife of James the Third. And meagre as the sources of our history may be, it seems improbable that an expedition which terminated so fatally, and to which so many of the choicest gallants of the day, and highest nobles of the land, must necessarily have been attached, should fail to be chronicled. Had they fallen in the field of battle, would all memory of them have been lost? Certainly not. If they perished on the ocean, why is history oblivious of their names? The very circumstance of a national calamity like this happening by shipwreck, being of more rare occurrence than one of equal magnitude in time of war, would, we think, be a very mean of securing it a more prominent place in the histories of the times. The ballad must therefore be either wholly fabulous, or it must refer to some other event than any yet spoken of.

Our own opinion is, that the ballad is founded on authentic history; and that it records the melancholy and disastrous fate of the gallant band which followed in the suite

of Margaret, daughter of Alexander the Third, when she was espoused to Eric of Norway. According to Fordun,* in this expedition many distinguished nobles accompanied her to Norway, to grace her nuptials; several of whom perished in a storm while on their return to Scotland. Whoever studies the ballad attentively, and makes due allowance for the transpositions, corruptions, and interpolations, which must unavoidably have crept into its text, must ultimately become a convert to the opinion we have now advanced. The bitter taunt of the Norwegians to Sir Patrick,

> "Ye Scottishmen spend a' our king's gowd
> And a' our *queenis fee*,"

was without meaning and point formerly, — its application is now felt.

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THE king sits in Dunfermline town,
Drinking the blude-red wine:
"O where will I get a skeely skipper
To sail this new ship of mine?"

O up and spake an eldern knight,
Sat at the king's right knee:

---

* "Paulo tamen ante hoc, A. sciz. D. MCC.LXXXI., desponsata est Margareta filia regis Alexandri tertii regi Norwegiæ Hanigow sive Hericio nuncupato; quæ pridie Idus Augusti Scotiam relinquens, nobili transfretavit apparatu, cum Waltero Bullok comite, et ejus de Menteth comitissa, una cum abbate de Balmurinach et Bernardo de Monte-alto *ac aliis multis militibus et nobilibus;* ac in vigilia assumptionis nostræ Dominæ Norweiam est ingressa et a rege honorifice suscepta, ac ab archiepiscopo illius regni, invita matre ejusdem regis, coronata est. Post vero nuptias solenniter celebratas *dicti abbas et Bernardus et alii plures in redeundo sunt submersi.*" — Fordun, Lib. X., cap. XXXVII.

"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
That ever sailed the sea."

Our king has written a braid letter,
And sealed it with his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was walking on the strand.

"To Noroway, to Noroway,
To Noroway o'er the faem;
The king's daughter of Noroway,
'T is thou maun bring her hame!"

The first word that Sir Patrick read,
Sae loud loud laughed he;
The neist word that Sir Patrick read,
The tear blindit his e'e.

"O wha is this has done this deed,
And tauld the king o' me,
To send us out at this time of the year,
To sail upon the sea?

"Be it wind, be it weet, be it hail, be it sleet,
Our ship must sail the faem;
The king's daughter of Noroway,
'T is we must fetch her hame."

They hoysed their sails on Monenday morn
Wi' a' the speed they may;
They hae landed in Noroway
Upon a Wodensday.

They hadna been a week, a week
In Noroway, but twae,
When that the lords o' Noroway
Began aloud to say:

"Ye Scottishmen spend a' our king's gowd
And a' our queenis fee."
"Ye lie, ye lie, ye liars loud!
Fu' loud I hear ye lie!

"For I hae brought as much white monie
As gane my men and me,—
And I hae brought a half-fou o' gude red gowd
Out owre the sea wi' me.

"Make ready, make ready, my merrymen a'!
Our gude ship sails the morn."
"Now, ever alake! my master dear,
I fear a deadly storm!

"I saw the new moon, late yestreen,
Wi' the auld moon in her arm;

And if we gang to sea, master,
I fear we 'll come to harm."

They hadna sailed a league, a league,
A league, but barely three,
When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud,
And gurly grew the sea.

The ankers brak, and the topmasts lap,
It was sic a deadly storm;
And the waves came o'er the broken ship
Till a' her sides were torn.

"O where will I get a gude sailor
To take my helm in hand,
Till I get up to the tall topmast
To see if I can spy land?"

"O here am I, a sailor gude,
To take the helm in hand,
Till you go up to the tall topmast, —
But I fear you 'll ne'er spy land."

He hadna gane a step, a step,
A step, but barely ane,
When a boult* flew out of our goodly ship,
And the salt sea it came in.

* We have taken the liberty of spelling this word aright, to save comments in future. It is unnecessary, almost, to men-

" Gae fetch a web o' the silken claith,
Another o' the twine,
And wap them into our ship's side,
And letna the sea come in."

They fetched a web o' the silken claith,
Another o' the twine,
And they wapped them roun' that gude ship's side,
— But still the sea came in.

O laith laith were our gude Scots lords
To weet their cork-heeled shoon!
But lang or a' the play was played,
They wat their hats aboon.*

And mony was the feather-bed
That floated on the faem;
And mony was the gude lord's son
That never mair came hame.

---

tion, that, in pronouncing it, the *l* is not heard. It seems to us particularly obvious, that, "if a bar, or bolt (Scottice *lout*), had loosened," a plank must necessarily have "started."

* This stanza we have heard sung, by old people, thus:

" Laith laith were our braw Scots lords
To weet the cra's o' their shoon!
But lang before the spring was played,
Their hair was wat aboon,"

which, perhaps, ought to be the genuine reading. The person who sung it said that *cra's* meant the upper leather of the shoe; and we are indebted to him for this information, otherwise we would have been at a loss to explain the word.

The ladyes wrang their fingers white,—
The maidens tore their hair;
A' for the sake of their true loves,—
For them they 'll see na mair.

O lang lang may the ladyes sit,
Wi' their fans into their hand,
Before they see Sir Patrick Spens
Come sailing to the strand!

And lang lang may the maidens sit,
Wi' their gowd kaims in their hair,
A' waiting for their ain dear loves,—
For them they 'll see na mair.

O forty miles off Aberdeen *
'T is fifty fathoms deep,
And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens
Wi' the Scots lords at his feet.

---

* This line varies very much in different editions. Though in the text we have adhered to that given in the *Border Minstrelsy*, we are inclined to favour the reading,—

"Half owre, half owre to Aberdour."

For, with submission to the opinion of Sir W. Scott, the meaning of this line is not that the shipwreck took place in the Frith of Forth, but midway between Aberdour and Norway. And, as it would seem from the narrative at the commencement of the ballad, that Sir Patrick sailed from the Forth, it is but fair to infer that in his disastrous voyage homeward, he would endeavour to make the same port. This opinion will be corroborated, if we are correct in assigning the ballad to the historical event mentioned in the introductory remarks.

## JOHNIE OF BREADISLEE.

History is silent with regard to this young Nimrod. "He appears," says the editor of the "Border Minstrelsy," "to have been an outlaw and deerstealer, — probably one of the broken men residing upon the border. It is sometimes said, that this outlaw possessed the old castle of Morton, in Dumfrieshire, now ruinous." Another tradition assigns Braid, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, to have been the scene of his "woeful hunting." A few stanzas of apparently an older copy of this ballad we have received, and, as they possess some merit, we have subjoined them to this copy (taken from the "Border Minstrelsy"), in the hope that the verses awanting may hereafter be supplied.

Johnie rose up in a May morning,
Called for water to wash his hands;—
"Gar loose to me the gude graie dogs
That are bound wi' iron bands."

When Johnie's mother gat word o' that,
Her hands for dule she wrang:
"O Johnie! for my benison,
To the grenewood dinna gang!

"Eneugh ye hae o' the gude wheat bread,
And eneugh o' the blude-red wine;
And therefore, for nae venison, Johnie,
I pray ye, stir frae hame."

But Johnie 's busk't up his gude bend bow,
His arrows, ane by ane;
And he has gane to Durrisdeer
To hunt the dun deer down.

As he came down by Merriemass,
And in by the benty line,
There has he espied a deer lying
Aneath a bush of ling.*

Johnie he shot, and the dun deer lap,
And he wounded her on the side;
But, atween the water and the brae,
His hounds they laid her pride.

And Johnie has bryttled† the deer sae weel,
That he 's had out her liver and lungs;
And wi' these he has feasted his bludy hounds,
As if they had been erls' sons.

---

* *Ling*, heath.

† *Bryttled*, to cut up venison. See the ancient ballad of *Chevy Chace*, verse 3.

They eat sae much o' the venison,
And drank sae much o' the blude,
That Johnie and a' his bludy hounds
Fell asleep, as they had been dead.

And by there came a silly auld carle,—
An ill death mote he die!
For he 's awa to Hislinton,
Where the Seven Foresters did lie.

"What news, what news, ye gray-headed carle,
What news bring ye to me?"
"I bring nae news," said the gray-headed carle,
"Save what these eyes did see.

"As I came down by Merriemass,
And down amang the scroggs,*
The bonniest childe that ever I saw
Lay sleeping amang his dogs.

"The shirt that was upon his back
Was o' the Holland fine;
The doublet which was over that
Was o' the lincome twine.

---

* *Scroggs*, stunted trees.

"The buttons that were on his sleeve
Were o' the goud sae gude;
The gude graie hounds he lay amang,
Their mouths were dyed wi' blude."

Then out and spak the First Forester,
The heid man ower them a',
"If this be Johnie o' Breadislee,
Nae nearer will we draw."

But up and spak the Sixth Forester,
(His sister's son was he),
"If this be Johnie o' Breadislee,
We soon shall gar him die!"

The first flight of arrows the Foresters shot,
They wounded him on the knee;
And out and spak the Seventh Forester,
"The next will gar him die."

Johnie 's set his back against an aik,
His fute against a stane;
And he has slain the Seven Foresters,
He has slain them a' but ane.

He has broke three ribs in that ane's side,
But and his collar bane;

He 's laid him twa-fald ower his steed,
Bade him carry the tidings hame.

"O is there na a bonnie bird
Can sing as I can say;
Could flee away to my mother's bower,
And tell to fetch Johnie away?" *

The starling flew to his mother's window stane,
It whistled and it sang;
And aye the ower word o' the tune
Was, — "Johnie tarries lang!"

They made a rod o' the hazel bush,
Another o' the slae-thorn tree,
And mony mony were the men
At fetching our Johnie.

Then out and spak his auld mother,
And fast her tears did fa', —
"Ye wad nae be warned, my son Johnie,
Frae the hunting to bide awa.

* Perhaps, after this stanza should be inserted the beautiful one preserved by Mr. Finlay, so descriptive, as he justly remarks, of the languor of approaching death:

"There 's no a bird in a' this forest
Will do as meikle for me,
As dip its wing in the wan water,
And straik it on my e'e bree."

"Aft hae I brought to Breadislee
The less gear * and the mair,
But I ne'er brought to Breadislee
What grieved my heart sae sair!

"But wae betyde that silly auld carle!
An ill death shall he die!
For the highest tree in Merriemass
Shall be his morning's fee."

Now Johnie's gude bend bow is broke,
And his gude graie dogs are slain;
And his body lies dead in Durrisdeer,
And his hunting it is done.

## JOHNIE OF BRAIDISBANK.

Johnie rose up in a May morning,
Called for water to wash his hands hands;
And he is awa to Braidisbanks,
To ding the dun deer down down,
To ding the dun deer down.

Johnie lookit east and Johnie lookit west,
And it' s lang before the sun sun;
And there did he spy the dun deer lie,
Beneath a bush of brume brume,
Beneath a bush o' brume.

* *Gear* usually signifies *goods*, but here *spoil*.

Johnie shot, and the dun deer lap,
And he 's woundit her in the side side;
Out then spake his sister's son,
"And the neist will lay her pride pride,
And the neist will lay her pride."

(*A stanza wanting.*)

They 've eaten sae meikle o' the gude venison,
And they 've drunken sae muckle o' the blude blude,
That they 've fallen into as sound a sleep
As gif that they were dead dead,
As gif that they were dead.

(*Some stanzas wanting.*)

"It 's doun, and it 's doun, and it 's doun doun,
And it 's doun amang the scrogs scrogs;
And there ye 'll espy twa bonnie boys lie
Asleep amang their dogs dogs,
Asleep amang their dogs."

(*Some stanzas wanting.*)

They waukened Johnie out o' his sleep,
And he 's drawn to him his coat coat; —
"My fingers five save me alive,
And a stout heart fail me not not,
And a stout heart fail me not."

. . . . . .

## THE MASTER OF WEEMYSS.

(*Never before published.*)

The Master of Weemyss has biggit a ship,
To saile upon the sea;
And four-and-twenty bauld marineres
Doe beare him companie.

They have hoistit sayle and left the land,
They have saylit mylis three;
When up there lap the bonnie mermayd,
All in the Norland sea.

"O whare saile ye," quo' the bonnie mermayd,
"Upon the saut sea faem?"
"It 's we are bounde until Noroway,—
God send us skaithless hame!"

O Noroway is a gay gay strande
And a merrie land, I trowe;
But nevir nane sall see Noroway,
Gin the mermayd keeps her vowe!

Down doukit then the mermayden
Deep intil the middil sea;
And merrie leuch that master bauld,
With his jollie companie.

They saylit awa, and they saylit awa,
They have saylit leagues ten;
When, lo! uplap be the gude ship's side
The self same mermayden.

Shee held a glass intil her richt hande,
In the uthir shee held a kame;
And shee kembit her haire, and aye shee sang,
As shee flotterit on the faem.

And shee gliskit round and round about,
Upon the waters wan;
O nevir againe on land or sea
Shall be seen sik a faire woman.

And shee shed the haire off her milk white bree
Wi' her fingers sae sma' and lang;
And fast as saylit that gude ship on,
Sae louder was aye her sang.

And aye shee sang, and aye shee sang,
As shee rade upon the sea:

"If ye bee men of Christian moulde,
Throwe the master out to mee.

"Throwe out to mee the master bauld,
If ye bee Christian men;
But an ye faile, though fast ye sayle,
Ye 'll nevir see land agen!

"Sayle on, sayle on, sayle on," said shee,
"Sayle on and nevir blinne;
The winde at will your saylis may fill,
But the land ye shall nevir win!"

It 's never word spak that master bauld,
But a loud laugh leuch the crewe;
And in the deep then the mermayden
Doun drappit frae their viewe.

But ilk ane kythit her bonnie face,
How dark dark grew its lire;
And ilk ane saw her bricht bricht eyne
Leming like coals o' fire.

And ilk ane saw her lang bricht hair
Gae flashing through the tide,
And the sparkles o' the glass shee brake
Upon that gude ship's side.

"Steer on, steer on, thou master bauld,
The wind blaws unco hie!"
"O there 's not a sterne in a' the lift
To guide us thro' the sea!"

"Steer on, steer on, thou master bauld,
The storm is coming fast!"
"Then up, then up, my bonnie boy,
Unto the topmost mast.

"Creep up unto the tallest mast,
Gae up, my ae best man;
Climb up until the tall top mast,
And spy gin ye see land."

"Oh all is mirk towards the eist,
And all is mirk be west;
Alas, there is not a spot of light,
Where any eye can rest!"

"Looke outs, looke oute, my bauldest man,
Looke oute unto the storme,
And if ye cannot get sicht o' land,
Do you see the dawin o' morn?"

"Oh alace, alace, my master deare,"
Spak then that ae best man,

"Nor licht, nor land, nor living thing,
Do I spy on any hand."

"Looke yet agen, my ae best man,
And tell me what ye do see."
"O Lord! I spy the false mermayden
Fast sayling out owre the sea!"

"How can ye spy the fause mermayden
Fast sayling on the mirk sea?
For there 's neither mune nor mornin' licht; —
In troth it can nevir bee."

"O there is neither mune nor mornin' licht,
Nor ae star's blink on the sea;
But, as I am a Christian man,
That witch woman I see!

"Good Lord! there is a scaud o' fire
Fast coming out owre the sea;
And fast therein the grim mermayden
Is sayling on to thee!

"She hailes our ship wi' a shrill shrill cry, —
She is coming, alace, more near!"
"Ah woe is me now," said the master bauld,
"For I both do see and hear!

"Come doun, come doun, my ae best man,
For an ill weird I maun drie:
Yet I reck not for my sinful self,
But thou, my trew companie!"

## HALBERT THE GRIM.

The following beautiful verses were suggested to the writer of them by the highly graphic description of the abode of Pluto, given by Matthew Paris. And the gentleman whose character is here attempted to be delineated is such a person as, in the estimation of the learned Monk of St. Albans, was fully entitled to be an inhabitant of the place of terrors.

*Miles quidam, qui vitam suam in cædibus innocentium, et torneamentis peregerat, et rapinis. Hic omnibus armis militibus armatus, equo nigerrimo insidebat; qui piceam flammam cum fœtore et fumo per os et nares, cum urgeretur calcaribus, efflabat.* — Matt. Paris, p. 219.

There is blood on that brow;
There is blood on that hand;
There is blood on that hauberk,
And blood on that brand.

Oh! bloody all over
Is his war cloak, I weet;
And he 's wrapped in the cover
Of murder's red sheet.

There is pity in many:
  Is there any in him?
No! ruth is a strange guest
  To Halbert the Grim.

The hardest may soften,
  The fiercest repent;
But the heart of Grim Halbert
  May never relent.

Death doing on earth
  Is ever his cry;
And pillage and plunder
  His hope in the sky!

'T is midnight, deep midnight,
  And dark is the heaven;
Halbert, in mockery,
  Wends to be shriven.

He kneels not to stone,
  And he bends not to wood;
But he swung round his brown blade,
  And hewed down the Rood.

He stuck his long sword
  With its point in the earth;

And he prayed to its cross hilt,
In mockery and mirth.

Thus lowly he louteth,
And mumbles his beads;
Then lightly he riseth,
And homeward he speeds.

His steed hurries on,
Darkling and dim;
All fearful it prances,
With Halbert the Grim.

Fiercer it tramples,
The spur gored its side;
Now downward and downward
Grim Halbert doth ride.

The brown wood is threaded,
The gray flood is passed;
And hoarser and wilder
Is the moan of the blast.

No star lends its taper,
No moon sheds her glow;
For dark is the dull path
That Baron must go.

Though dark is the sky,
And no moon shines abroad,
Yet, flashing with fire,
Now gleams the lone road!

And his black steed, I trow,
As it galloped on,
With a hot sulphur halo
And flame-flash all shone.

From nostril and eye
Out gushed the pale flame,
And from its chafed mouth the
Churn'd fire-froth came.

They are two! they are two!—
They are coal-black as night,
That now staunchly follow
That grim Baron's flight.

In each lull of the wild blast,
Out breaks their deep yell,—
'T is the slot of the Doomed One
These hounds track so well.

Oh! downward, still downward,
Slopeth his way;

No let hath his progress,
No gate bids him stay.

No noise hath his horse-hoof,
As onward it sped;
But silent it falls,
As the foot of the dead!

But redder and redder
Flares far its bright eye,
And harsher these dark hounds
Yell out their fierce cry.

Sheer downward, and downward,
Then dashed life and limb,
As, careering to hell,
Sunk Halbert the Grim.

---

orate.pro.anima.ejus,

## HYND HORN.

An imperfect copy of this very old Ballad appeared in "Select Scottish Songs, Ancient and Modern," edited by Mr. Cromek; but that gentleman seems not to have been aware of the jewel he had picked up, as it is passed over without a single remark. We have been fortunate enough to recover two copies from recitation, which, joined to the stanzas preserved by Mr. Cromek, have enabled us to present it to the public in its present complete state. Though Hynd Horn possesses no claims upon the reader's attention, on account of its Poetry, yet it is highly valuable, as illustrative of the history of Romantick Ballad. In fact, it is nothing else than a portion of the ancient English Metrical Romance of "Kyng Horn," which some benevolent pen, peradventure, "for luf of the lewed man," hath stripped of its "quainte Inglis," and given

> "In symple speche as he couthe,
> That is lightest in manne's mouthe."

Of this the reader will be at once convinced, if he compares it with the Romance alluded to, or rather with the fragment of the one preserved in the Auchinleck MS., entitled "Horne Childe and Maiden Riminild," both of which ancient Poems are to be found in Ritson's "Metrical Romances."

It is, perhaps, unnecessary to remind the reader, that Hend, or Hynd, means "courteous, kind, affable," &c, — an epithet which, we doubt not, the hero of the Ballad was fully entitled to assume. The tune to which the ballad is sung will be given at the end of the volume; and any other notices we have to offer respecting it will find a place in the preliminary remarks to accompany the volume.

---

NEAR Edinburgh was a young child born,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And his name it was called Young Hynd Horn,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

Seven lang years he served the King,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And it 's a' for the sake of his dochter Jean,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

The King an angry man was he,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
He sent young Hynd Horn to the sea,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"Oh! I never saw my love before,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
Till I saw her thro' an augre bore,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"And she gave to me a gay gold ring,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
With three shining diamonds set therein,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"And I gave to her a silver wand,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
With three singing laverocks set thereon,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"What if those diamonds lose their hue,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
Just when my love begins for to rew,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie?"

"For when your ring turns pale and wan,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
Then I 'm in love with another man,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

He 's left the land, and he 's gone to the sea,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And he 's stayed there seven years and a day,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

Seven lang years he has been on the sea,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;

And Hynd Horn has looked how his ring may be,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

But when he looked this ring upon,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
The shining diamonds were both pale and wan,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

Oh! the ring it was both black and blue,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And she 's either dead, or she 's married,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

He 's left the seas, and he 's come to the land,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And the first he met was an auld beggar man,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"What news, what news, my silly auld man?
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
For it 's seven years since I have seen land,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"What news, what news, thou auld beggar man?
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
What news, what news, by sea or land?
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

"No news at all," said the auld beggar man,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
"But there is a wedding in the King's hall,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"There is a King's dochter in the West,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And she has been married thir nine nights past,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"Into the bride-bed she winna gang,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
Till she hears tell of her ain Hynd Horn,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

"Wilt thou give to me thy begging coat?
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And I 'll give to thee my scarlet cloak,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"Wilt thou give to me thy begging staff?
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And I 'll give to thee my good gray steed,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

The auld beggar man cast off his coat,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;

And he 's ta'en up the scarlet cloak,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

The auld beggar man threw down his staff,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And he has mounted the good gray steed,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

The auld beggar man was bound for the mill,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
But young Hynd Horn for the King's hall,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

The auld beggar man was bound for to ride,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
But young Hynd Horn was bound for the bride,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

When he came to the King's gate,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
He asked a drink for young Hynd Horn's sake,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

These news unto the bonnie bride came,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
That at the yett there stands an auld man,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"There stands an auld man at the King's gate,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
He asketh a drink for young Hynd Horn's sake,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

"I 'll go through nine fires so hot,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
But I 'll give him a drink for young Hynd Horn's sake,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

She went to the gate where the auld man did stand,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And she gave him a drink out of her own hand,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

She gave him a cup out of her own hand,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
He drunk out the drink, and dropt in the ring,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"Got thou it by sea, or got thou it by land?
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
Or got thou it off a dead man's hand?
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

"I got it not by sea, but I got it by land,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;

For I got it out of thine own hand,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

"I 'll cast off my gowns of brown,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And I 'll follow thee from town to town,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"I 'll cast off my gowns of red,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And along with thee I 'll beg my bread,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

"Thou need not cast off thy gowns of brown,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
For I can make thee lady of many a town,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"Thou need not cast off thy gowns of red,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
For I can maintain thee with both wine and bread,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

The bridegroom thought he had the bonnie bride wed,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
But young Hynd Horn took the bride to the bed,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

## BONNIE GEORGE CAMPBELL.

This is probably a lament for one of the adherents of the house of Argyle, who fell in the battle of Glenlivat, stricken on Thursday, the third day of October, 1594 years.* Of this ballad Mr. Finlay had only recovered three stanzas, which he has given in the Preface to his "Scottish Historical and Romantic Ballads," p. xxxiii., introduced by the following remarks: — "There is another fragment still remaining, which appears to have belonged to a ballad of adventure, perhaps of real history. I am acquainted with no poem of which the lines, as they stand, can be supposed to have formed a part." The words and the musick of this Lament are published in the fifth volume of "The Scottish Minstrel."

Hie upon Hielands,
And low upon Tay,
Bonnie George Campbell
Rade out on a day.
Saddled and bridled
And gallant rade he;

* Gordon's *Genealogical History of the Earldom of Sutherland.*

Hame cam his gude horse,
  But never cam he!

Out cam his auld mither
  Greeting fu' sair,
And out cam his bonnie bride
  Rivin' her hair.
Saddled and bridled
  And booted rade he;
Toom hame cam the saddle,
  But never cam he!

"My meadow lies green,
  And my corn is unshorn;
My barn is to big,
  And my babie 's unborn."
Saddled and bridled
  And booted rade he;
Toom hame cam the saddle,
  But never cam he!

## YOUNG BENJIE.

(FROM THE BORDER MINSTRELSY.)

Of a' the maids o' fair Scotland,
The fairest was Marjorie;
And young Benjie was her ae true love,
And a dear true love was he.

And wow! but they were lovers dear,
And loved fu' constantlie;
But aye the mair when they fell out,
The sairer was their plea.*

And they hae quarrell'd on a day,
Till Marjorie's heart grew wae;
And she said she 'd chuse another luve,
And let young Benjie gae.

And he was stout† and proudhearted,
And thought o't bitterlie;

---

* *Plea*, used obliquely for *dispute*.
† *Stout*, through this whole ballad (unless in one instance), signifies *haughty*.

And he 's gane by the wan moonlight,
To meet his Marjorie.

" O open, open, my true love,
O open, and let me in ! "
" I dare na open, young Benjie,
My three brothers are within."

" Ye lied, ye lied, ye bonnie burd,
Sae loud 's I hear ye lie ;
As I came by the Lowden banks,
They bade gude e'en to me.

" But fare ye weel, my ae fause love,
That I have loved sae lang !
It sets ye,* chuse another love,
And let young Benjie gang."

Then Marjorie turned her round about,
The tear blinding her e'e :
" I dare na, dare na, let thee in,
But I 'll come down to thee."

Then saft she smiled, and said to him,
" O what ill hae I dune ? "

---

* *Sets ye*, — becomes you, irony.

He took her in his armis twa,
And threw her o'er the linn.

The stream was strang, the maid was stout,
And laith, laith to be dang;*
But ere she wan the Lowden's banks,
Her fair colour was wan.

Then up bespak her eldest brother,
"O see na ye what I see?"
And out then spak her second brother,
"It 's our sister Marjorie!"

Out then spak her eldest brother,
"O how shall we her ken?"
And out then spak her youngest brother,
"There 's a honey-mark on her chin."

Then they 've ta'en up the comely corpse
And laid it on the ground:
"O wha has killed our ae sister,
And how can he be found?

"The night it is her low lykewake,
The morn her burial day,

---

* *Dang*, — defeated.

And we maun watch at mirk midnight,
And hear what she will say."

Wi' doors ajar, and candle light,
And torches burning clear,
The streikit corpse, till still midnight,
They waked, but naething hear.

About the middle o' the night
The cocks began to craw,
And at the dead hour o' the night
The corpse began to thraw.

"O whae has done the wrang, sister,
Or dared the deadly sin?
Whae was sae stout, and fear'd nae dout,
As thraw ye o'er the linn?"

"Young Benjie was the first ae man
I laid my love upon;
He was sae stout and proudhearted,
He threw me o'er the linn."

"Sall we young Benjie head, sister,
Sall we young Benjie hang,
Or sall we pike out his twa gray een,
And punish him ere he gang?"

"Ye mauna Benjie head, brothers,
Ye mauna Benjie hang,
But ye maun pike out his twa gray een,
And punish him ere he gang.

"Tie a green gravat about his neck
And lead him out and in,
And the best ae servant about your house
To wait young Benjie on.

"And aye, at every seven years' end,
Ye 'll tak him to the linn;
For that 's the penance he maun drie,
To scug* his deadly sin."

---

* *Scug*, — shelter, or expiate.

## SIR HUGH,

### OR THE JEW'S DAUGHTER.

Two copies of this ballad appeared in Herd's Collection, Edinburgh, 1776, under the above title; a third is printed in Dr. Percy's "Reliques"; and Mr. Jamieson has given another copy of the same ballad, taken down from recitation. To this last, which differs in a few particulars from those already published, its learned Editor has prefixed some interesting notices, which may be consulted with advantage by the curious. The present edition is likewise given as taken down from the recitation of a lady; and as it contains some additional circumstances not to be found in any of the copies mentioned above, it has been deemed proper to publish it as it stands, without attempting to incorporate it with any other version.

YESTERDAY was brave Hallowday,
And, above all days of the year,
The schoolboys all got leave to play,
And little Sir Hugh was there.

He kicked the ball with his foot,
And kepped it with his knee,

And even in at the Jew's window
He gart the bonnie ba' flee.

Out then came the Jew's daughter, —
"Will ye come in and dine?"
"I winna come in and I canna come in
Till I get that ball of mine.

"Throw down that ball to me, maiden,
Throw down the ball to me."
"I winna throw down your ball, Sir Hugh,
Till ye come up to me."

She pu'd the apple frae the tree,
It was baith red and green,
She gave it unto little Sir Hugh,
With that his heart did win.

She wiled him into ae chamber,
She wiled him into twa,
She wiled him into the third chamber,
And that was warst o't a'.

She took out a little penknife,
Hung low down by her spare,
She twined this young thing o' his life,
And a word he ne'er spak mair.

And first came out the thick, thick blood,
And syne came out the thin,
And syne came out the bonnie heart's blood, —
There was nae mair within.

She laid him on a dressing table,
She dress'd him like a swine,*
Says, "Lie ye there, my bonnie Sir Hugh,
Wi' ye're apples red and green!"

She put him in a case of lead,
Says, "Lie ye there and sleep!"
She threw him into the deep draw-well
Was fifty fathom deep.

A schoolboy walking in the garden
Did grievously hear him moan,
He ran away to the deep draw-well
And fell down on his knee,

Says, "Bonnie Sir Hugh, and pretty Sir Hugh,
I pray you speak to me;
If you speak to any body in this world,
I pray you speak to me."

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* "She dressed him like a *swan*" was the reading we got; but, in deference to former editions, we have subetituted *swine*, though it is questionable how far a Jewess could be skilled in the cookery of an animal abominated by her people.

When bells were rung and mass was sung,
And every body went hame,
Then every lady had her son,
But Lady Helen had nane.

She rolled her mantle her about,
And sore, sore did she weep;
She ran away to the Jew's castle
When all were fast asleep.

She cries, "Bonnie Sir Hugh, O pretty Sir Hugh,
I pray you speak to me;
If you speak to any body in this world,
I pray you speak to me."

"Lady Helen, if ye want your son,
I 'll tell ye where to seek;
Lady Helen, if ye want your son,
He 's in the well sae deep."

She ran away to the deep draw-well,
And she fell down on her knee;
Saying, "Bonnie Sir Hugh, O pretty Sir Hugh,
I pray ye speak to me,
If ye speak to any body in the world,
I pray ye speak to me."

"Oh! the lead it is wondrous heavy, mother,
The well it is wondrous deep,
The little penknife sticks in my throat,
And I downa to ye speak.

"But lift me out o' this deep draw-well,
And bury me in yon churchyard;
"Put a Bible at my head," he says,
"And a Testament at my feet,
And pen and ink at every side,
And I 'll lie still and sleep.

"And go to the back of Maitland town,
Bring me my winding sheet;
For it 's at the back of Maitland town
That you and I shall meet."

O the broom, the bonny, bonny broom,
The broom that makes full sore,
A woman's mercy is very little,
But a man's mercy is more.*

* This stanza, though meant for a moral, seems to have little business here, and we are at a loss to make sense of the second line.

## THE LAIRD O' LOGIE,

### OR MAY MARGARET.

This ballad appears to be founded on an incident which is detailed at some length in Spottiswood's "History of the Church of Scotland" (see ed. Lond. 1668, b. vi. p. 389); and also in "The Historie of King James the Sext," quoted by the editor of the "Border Minstrelsy." The common printed edition of this ballad goes under the title of "The Laird of Ochiltree," but the copy here followed is that recovered by Sir Walter Scott, which is preferable to the other, as agreeing more closely, both in the name and in the circumstance, with the real fact. The third stanza in the present copy was obtained from recitation; and, as it describes very naturally the agitated behaviour of a person who, like May Margaret, had high interests at stake, it was considered worthy of being preserved.

I will sing, if ye will hearken,
If ye will hearken unto me;
The king has ta'en a poor prisoner,
The wanton laird o' young Logie.

Young Logie 's laid in Edinburgh chapel,
Carmichael 's the keeper o' the key;

And May Margaret 's lamenting sair,
A' for the love of young Logie.

May Margaret sits in the queen's bouir,
Knicking her fingers ane be ane,
Cursing the day that she e'er was born,
Or that she e'er heard o' Logie's name.

"Lament, lament na, May Margaret,
And of your weeping let me be;
For ye maun to the king himsell,
To seek the life o' young Logie."

May Margaret has kilted her green cleiding,
And she has curl'd back her yellow hair, —
"If I canna get young Logie's life,
Farewell to Scotland for evermair."

When she came before the king,
She knelit lowly on her knee.
"O what 's the matter, May Margaret?
And what need 's a' this courtesie?"

"A boon, a boon, my noble liege,
A boon, a boon, I beg o' thee!
And the first boon that I come to crave
Is to grant me the life o' young Logie."

"O na, O na, May Margaret,
Forsooth, and so it mauna be;
For a' the gowd o' fair Scotland
Shall not save the life o' young Logie."

But she has stown the king's redding kaim,
Likewise the queen her wedding knife;
And sent the tokens to Carmichael,
To cause young Logie get his life.

She sent him a purse o' the red gowd,
Another o' the white monie;
She sent him a pistol for each hand,
And bade him shoot when he gat free.

When he came to the Tolbooth stair,
There he let his volley flee;
It made the king in his chamber start,
E'en in the bed where he might be.

"Gae out, gae out, my merrymen a',
And bid Carmichael come speak to me;
For I 'll lay my life the pledge o' that,
That yon 's the shot o' young Logie."

When Carmichael came before the king,
He fell low down upon his knee;

The very first word that the king spake
Was,—"Where 's the laird of young Logie?"

Carmichael turn'd him round about
(I wot the tear blinded his e'e),—
"There came a token frae your grace
Has ta'en away the laird frae me."

"Hast thou play'd me that, Carmichael?
And hast thou play'd me that?" quoth he;
"The morn the Justice Court 's to stand,
And Logie's place ye maun supplie."

Carmichael 's awa to Margaret's bower,
Even as fast as he may drie,—
"O if young Logie be within,
Tell him to come and speak with me!"

May Margaret turn'd her round about
(I wot a loud laugh laughed she),—
"The egg is chipp'd, the bird is flown,
Ye 'll see nae mair of young Logie."

The tane is shipped at the pier of Leith,
The tother at the Queen's Ferrie;
And she 's gotten a father to her bairn,
The wanton laird of young Logie.

## THE TWA BROTHERS.

THE domestic tragedy which this affecting ballad commemorates is not without a precedent in real history; nay, we are almost inclined to believe that it originated in the following melancholy event:

"This year, 1589, in the moneth of July, ther falls out a sad accident, as a further warneing that God was displeased with the familie. The Lord Sommervill haveing come from Cowthally, earlie in the morning, in regaird the weather was hott, he had ridden hard to be at the Drum be ten a clock, which haveing done, he laid him down to rest. The servant, with his two sones, William Master of Sommervill, and John his brother, went with the horses to ane Shott of land, called the Prety Shott, directly opposite the front of the house, where there was some meadow ground for grassing the horses, and willowes to shaddow themselves from the heat. They had not long continued in this place, when the Master of Somervill efter some litle rest awakeing from his sleep and finding his pistolles that lay hard by him wett with the dew he began to rub and dry them, when unhappily one of them went off the ratch, being lying upon his knee, and the muzel turned syde-ways, the ball strocke his brother John directly in the head, and killed him outright,

soe that his sorrowful brother never had one word from him, albeit he begged it with many teares." — *Memorie of the Somervilles*, Vol. I., p. 467.

The reader will find in the first volume of "Popular Ballads and Songs" another edition of this ballad, which, in point of merit, is perhaps superior to the present copy. The third stanza of that edition was, however, imperfect, and the ingenious editor, Mr. Jamieson, has supplied four lines to render it complete. Excellent though his interpolations generally are, it will be seen, that, in this instance, he has quite misconceived the scope and tendency of the piece on which he was working, and in consequence has supplied a reading with which the rest of his own copy is at complete variance, and which at the same time sweeps away the deep impression this simple ballad would otherwise have made upon the feelings; for it is almost unnecessary to mention that its touching interest is made to centre in the boundless sorrow and cureless remorse of him who had been the unintentional cause of his brother's death, and in the solicitude which that high-minded and generous spirit expresses, even in the last agonies of nature, for the safety and fortunes of the truly wretched and unhappy survivor. Mr. Jamieson's addition is given below. By that addition this ballad has been altered in one of its most distinctive and essential features; hence, the present copy, which preserves the genuine reading in the stanza referred to, though it might have derived considerable improvements in other particulars from the one given by Mr. Jamieson, has, on the whole, been preferred.

The addition to the stanza in question is inclosed by crotchets.

"They warstled up, they warstled down,
The lee-lang simmer's day;
[And nane was near to part the strife
That raise atween them tway,
Till out and Willie 's drawn his sword,
And did his brother slay.]"

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THERE were twa brothers at the scule,
And when they got awa', —
"It 's will ye play at the stane-chucking,
Or will ye play at the ba',
Or will ye gae up to yon hill head,
And there we 'll warsel a fa'?"

"I winna play at the stane-chucking,
Nor will I play at the ba';
But I 'll gae up to yon bonnie green hill,
And there we 'll warsel a fa'."

They warsled up, they warsled down,
Till John fell to the ground;
A dirk fell out of William's pouch,
And gave John a deadly wound.

"O lift me upon your back,
Tak me to yon well fair;

And wash my bluidy wounds o'er and o'er,
And they 'll ne'er bleed nae mair."

"He 's lifted his brother upon his back,
Ta'en him to yon well fair;
He 's wash'd his bluidy wounds o'er and o'er,
But they bleed ay mair and mair.

"Tak ye aff my Holland sark,
And rive it gair by gair,
And row it in my bluidy wounds,
And they 'll ne'er bleed nae mair."

He 's taken aff his Holland sark,
And torn it gair by gair;
He 's rowit it in his bluidy wounds,
But they bleed ay mair and mair.

"Tak now aff my green cleiding,
And row me saftly in;
And tak me up to yon kirk style,
Whare the grass grows fair and green."

He 's taken aff the green cleiding,
And rowed him saftly in;
He 's laid him down by yon kirk style,
Whare the grass grows fair and green.

"What will ye say to your father dear,
When ye gae hame at e'en?"
"I 'll say ye 're lying at yon kirk style,
Whare the grass grows fair and green."

"O no, O no, my brother dear,
O you must not say so;
But say that I 'm gane to a foreign land,
Whare nae man does me know."

When he sat in his father's chair,
He grew baith pale and wan.
"O what blude 's that upon your brow?
O dear son, tell to me."
"It is the blude o' my gude gray steed,
He wadna ride wi' me."

"O thy steed's blude was ne'er sae red,
Nor e'er sae dear to me:
O what blude 's this upon your cheek?
O dear son, tell to me."
"It is the blude of my greyhound,
He wadna hunt for me."

"O thy hound's blude was ne'er sae red,
Nor e'er sae dear to me:
O what blude 's this upon your hand?
O dear son, tell to me."

"It is the blude of my gay goss hawk,
He wadna flee for me."

"O thy hawk's blude was ne'er sae red,
Nor e'er sae dear to me:
O what blude 's this upon your dirk?
Dear Willie, tell to me."
"It is the blude of my ae brother,
O dule and wae is me!"

"O what will ye say to your father?
Dear Willie, tell to me."
"I 'll saddle my steed, and awa I 'll ride
To dwell in some far countrie."

"O when will ye come hame again?
Dear Willie, tell to me."
"When sun and mune leap on yon hill,
And that will never be."

She turn'd hersel' right round about,
And her heart burst into three:
"My ae best son is deid and gane,
And my tother ane I 'll ne'er see."

## THE CRUSADER'S FAREWELL.

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The banners rustle in the wind,
  The angry trumpets swell;
They call me, lady, from thy arms,
  They bid me sigh farewell!

They call me to a distant land
  To quell a Paynim foe;
To leave the blandishments of love,
  For danger, strife, and woe.

Yet deem not, lady, though afar
  It be my hap to roam,
That e'er my constant heart shall stray
  From love, from thee, and home.

No! in the tumult of the fight,
  'Midst Salem's chivalrie,
The thought that arms this hand with death
  Shall be the thought of thee!

## MAY COLVIN,

### OR FALSE SIR JOHN.

This ballad is given from a copy obtained from recitation, collated with another copy to be found in the Edinburgh Collection, 1776.

False Sir John a wooing came
To a maid of beauty fair;
May Colvin was the lady's name,
Her father's only heir.

He 's courted her butt, and he 's courted her ben,
And he 's courted her into the ha',
Till once he got this lady's consent
To mount and ride awa'.

She 's gane to her father's coffers,
Where all his money lay;
And she 's taken the red, and she 's left the white,
And so lightly as she tripped away.

She 's gane down to her father's stable,
  Where all his steeds did stand ;
And she 's taken the best, and she 's left the warst,
  That was in her father's land.

He rode on, and she rode on,
  They rode a lang simmer's day,
Until they came to a broad river,
  An arm of a lonesome sea.

"Loup off the steed," says false Sir John ;
  "Your bridal bed you see ;
For it 's seven king's daughters I have drowned here,
  And the eighth I 'll out make with thee.

"Cast off, cast off your silks so fine,
  And lay them on a stone,
For they are o'er good and o'er costly
  To rot in the salt sea foam.

"Cast off, cast off your Holland smock,
  And lay it on this stone,
For it 's too fine and o'er costly
  To rot in the salt sea foam."

"O turn you about, thou false Sir John,
  And look to the leaf o' the tree ;

For it never became a gentleman
A naked woman to see."

He 's turned himself straight round about,
To look to the leaf o' the tree ;
She 's twined her arms about his waist,
And thrown him into the sea.

"O hold a grip of me, May Colvin,
For fear that I should drown ;
I 'll take you hame to your father's gates,
And safely I 'll set you down."

"O lie you there, thou false Sir John,
O lie you there," said she ;
"For you lie not in a caulder bed
Than the ane you intended for me."

So she went on her father's steed,
As swift as she could flee ;
And she came hame to her father's gates
At the breaking of the day.

Up then spake the pretty parrot :
"May Colvin, where have you been ?
What has become of false Sir John,
That wooed you so late yestreen ? "

Up then spake the pretty parrot,
In the bonnie cage where it lay:
"O what hae ye done with the false Sir John,
That he behind you does stay?

"He wooed you butt, he wooed you ben,
He wooed you into the ha',
Until he got your own consent
For to mount and gang awa'."

"O hold your tongue, my pretty parrot,
Lay not the blame upon me;
Your cage will be made of the beaten gold,
And the spakes of ivorie."

Up then spake the king himself,
In the chamber where he lay:
"O what ails the pretty parrot,
That prattles so long ere day?"

"It was a cat cam to my cage door;
I thought 't would have worried me;
And I was calling on fair May Colvin
To take the cat from me."

## LADY MAISRY.

This excellent old ballad, which is very popular in many parts of Scotland, is given from Mr. Jamieson's Collection.

The young lords o' the North Country
Have all a wooing gane,
To win the love of Lady Maisry;
But o' them she wou'd hae nane.

O they hae sought her, Lady Maisry,
Wi' broaches and wi' rings;
And they hae courted her, Lady Maisry,
Wi' a' kin kind of things.

And they hae sought her, Lady Maisry,
Frae father and frae mither;
And they hae sought her, Lady Maisry,
Frae sister and frae brither.

And they hae follow'd her, Lady Maisry,
Through chamber and through ha';
But a' that they could say to her,
Her answer still was "Na."

"O haud your tongues, young men," she said,
"And think nae mair on me;
For I 've gi'en my love to an English lord,
Sae think nae mair on me."

Her father's kitchey-boy heard that,
(An ill death mot he die!)
And he is in to her brother,
As fast as gang cou'd he.

"O is my father and my mother weel,
But and my brothers three?
Gin my sister, Lady Maisry, be weel,
There 's naething can ail me."

"Your father and your mother is weel,
But and your brothers three;
Your sister, Lady Maisry, 's weel;
Sae big wi' bairn is she."

"A malison light on the tongue
Sic tidings tells to me! —
But gin it be a lie you tell,
You shall be hanged hie."

He 's doen him to his sister's bower,
Wi' mickle dool and care;

And there he saw her, Lady Maisry,
Kembing her yellow hair.

"O wha is aucht that bairn," he says,
"That ye sae big are wi' ?
And gin ye winna own the truth,
This moment ye shall die."

She 's turned her richt and round about,
And the kembe fell frae her han';
A trembling seized her fair bodie,
And her rosy cheek grew wan.

"O pardon me, my brother dear,
And the truth I 'll tell to thee ;
My bairn it is to Lord William,
And he is betrothed to me."

"O cou'dna ye gotten dukes, or lords,
Intill your ain countrie,
That ye drew up wi' an English dog,
To bring this shame on me ?

"But ye maun gi'e up your English lord,
Whan your young babe is born ;
For, gin ye keep by him an hour langer,
Your life shall be forlorn."

"I will gi'e up this English lord,
Till my young babe is born;
But the never a day nor hour langer,
Though my life should be forlorn."

"O whare is a' my merry young men
Wham I gi'e meat and fee,
To pu' the bracken and the thorn,
To burn this vile whore wi'?".

"O whare will I get a bonny boy,
To help me in my need,
To rin wi' haste to Lord William,
And bid him come wi' speed?"

O out it spak a bonny boy,
Stood by her brother's side, —
"It 's I wad rin your errand, lady,
O'er a' the warld wide.

"Aft ha'e I rin your errands, lady,
When blawin' baith wind and weet;
But now I 'll rin your errand, lady,
With saut tears on my cheek."

O whan he came to broken briggs,
He bent his bow and swam;

And whan he came to the green grass growin',
He slack'd his shoon and ran.

And whan he came to Lord William's yetts,
He badena to chap or ca';
But set his bent bow to his breast,
And lightly lap the wa';
And, or the porter was at the yett,
The boy was in the ha'.

"O is my biggins broken, boy?
Or is my towers won?
Or is my lady lighter yet,
O' a dear daughter or son?"

"Your biggin isna broken, sir,
Nor is your towers won;
But the fairest lady in a' the land
This day for you maun burn."

"O saddle to me the black, the black,
Or saddle to me the brown;
Or saddle to me the swiftest steed
That ever rade frae a town."

Or he was near a mile awa',
She heard his weir-horse sneeze:

"Mend up the fire, my fause brother,
It 's nae come to my knees."

O whan he lighted at the yett,
She heard his bridle ring:
"Mend up the fire, my fause brother;
It 's far yet frae my chin.

"Mend up the fire to me, brother,
Mend up the fire to me;
For I see him comin' hard and fast
Will soon men 't up for thee.

"O gin my hands had been loose, Willy,
Sae hard as they are boun',
I wad ha'e turned me frae the gleed,
And casten out your young son."

"O I 'll gar burn for you, Maisry,
Your father and your mother;
And I 'll gar burn for you, Maisry,
Your sister and your brother;

"And I 'll gar burn for you, Maisry,
The chief o' a' your kin;
And the last bonfire that I come to,
Mysell I will cast in."

## THE BONNY EARL OF MURRAY.

"The 7 of Februarij this yeire, 1592, the Earle of Murray was cruelly murthered by the Earle of Huntley, at his house in Dunibrissell, in Fyffeshyre, and with him Dumbar, Shriffe of Murray; it [was] given out, and publickly talked, that the Earle of Huntley was only the instrument of perpetratting this facte, to satisffie the Kinges jelosie of Murray, quhom the Queine, more rashlie than wyslie, some few dayes before had commendit in the Kinges heiringe, with too many epithetts of a proper and gallant man. The ressons of these surmisses proceidit from proclamatione of the Kinges the 18 of Marche following, inhibitting the younge Earle of Murray to persew the Earle of Huntley for his fathers slaughter, in respecte he, being wardit in the castell of Blacknesse for the same murther, was willing to abyde his tryell; averring that he had done nothing, bot by the Kinges ma^tie^ commissione: and so was neither airt nor pairt of the murther."—*Annales of Scotland, by Sir James Balfour*, Vol. I. Edinburgh, 1824. For other accounts of this transaction, see Spottiswood, Moyse's "Memoires," Calderwood's "History of the Church," and Gordon's "Genealogical History of the Earldom of Sutherland."

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Ye Highlands, and ye Law-lands,
Oh! quhair hae ye been?

They hae slaine the Earl of Murray,
And hae lain him on the green.

Now wae be to thee, Huntly!
And quhairfore did you sae?
I bade you bring him wi' you,
But forbade you him to slay.

He was a braw gallant,
And he rid at the ring;
And the bonny Earl of Murray,
Oh! he might hae been a king.

He was a braw gallant,
And he played at the ba';
And the bonny Earl of Murray
Was the flower amang them a'.

He was a braw gallant,
And he play'd at the gluve;
And the bonny Earl of Murray,
Oh! he was the Queenes luve.

Oh! lang will his lady
Look owre the castle Downe,*

* "I had conjectured this to be the true reading, before I was aware that a friend of Mr. Pinkerton had anticipated me.

Ere she see the Earl of Murray
Cum sounding thro' the towne.

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It has always, before the present edition, been printed, 'look our the castle downe,' which is hardly sense." — Finlay's *Ballads*, Vol. I. This is not true. Had Mr. Finlay taken the trouble of consulting Ramsay's *Tea-table Miscellany*, Edinburgh, 1775, he would there have found the line in question printed correctly, yea, even according to his fancied emendation!

## THE BONNIE EARL O' MURRAY.

This is a different ballad from the one that precedes it; but, owing to the same peculiarity of measure of both, Mr. Finlay conjectures, which is not at all unlikely, that they may, at one period, have been united.

Open the gates,
And let him come in;
He is my brother Huntly,
He 'll do him nae harm.

The gates they were open't,
They let him come in;
But fause traitor Huntly,
He did him great harm.

He 's ben and ben,
And ben to his bed;
And with a sharp rapier
He stabbed him dead.

The lady came down the stair,
Wringing her hands:

"He has slain the Earl o' Murray,
The flower o' Scotland."

But Huntly lap on his horse;
Rade to the king:
"Ye 're welcome hame, Huntly,
And whare hae ye been?

"Whare hae ye been?
And how hae ye sped?"
"I 've killed the Earl o' Murray
Dead in his bed."

"Foul fa' you, Huntly!
And why did ye so?
You might have taen the Earl of Murray,
And saved his life too."

"Her bread it 's to bake,
Her yill is to brew;
My sister 's a widow,
And sair do I rue."

"Her corn grows ripe,
Her meadows grow green;
But in bonny Dinnibristle
I darena be seen."

## YOUNG WATERS.

This ballad, like the two former, has been supposed to refer to the fate of the unfortunate Earl of Murray; but, at best, this is a guess, which, for one chance it has of being right, there are ten chances that it is wrong.

About Zule quhen the wind blew cule,
And the round tables began,
Ah! there is cum to our king's court
Mony a well-favor'd man.

The queen luikit owre the castle wa',
Beheld baith dale and down,
And there she saw young Waters
Cum riding to the town.

His footmen they did rin before,
His horsemen rade behind,
And mantel of the burning gowd
Did keep him frae the wind.

Gowden graith'd his horse before,
And siller shod behind;

The horse young Waters rade upon
Was fleeter than the wind.

Out then spak a wylie lord,
Unto the queen said he:
"O tell me quha 's the fairest face
Rides in the company?"

"I 've sene lord, and I 've seen laird,
And knights of high degree,
But a fairer face than young Waters'
Mine eyne did never see."

Out then spak the jealous king
(And an angry man was he):
"O, if he had been twice as fair,
You micht have excepted me."

"You 're neither laird nor lord," she says,
"But the king that wears the crown;
There 's not a knight in fair Scotland,
But to thee maun bow down."

For a' that she could do or say,
Appeased he wadna be;
But for the words which she had said,
Young Waters he maun die.

They hae ta'en young Waters, and
Put fetters to his feet;
They hae ta'en young Waters, and
Thrown him in dungeon deep.

Aft I have ridden thro' Stirling town,
In the wind bot and the weit;
But I ne'er rade thro' Stirling town
Wi' fetters at my feet.

Aft I have ridden thro' Stirling town,
In the wind bot and the rain;
But I ne'er rode thro' Stirling town
Ne'er to return again.

They hae ta'en to the heiding hill
His young son in his cradle;
And they hae ta'en to the heiding hill
His horse bot and the saddle.

They hae ta'en to the heiding hill
His lady fair to see;
And for the words the queen had spoke
Young Waters he did die.

## LADY MARY ANN.

"I HAVE extracted these beautiful stanzas from Johnson's 'Poetical Museum.' They are worthy of being better known, — a circumstance which may lead to a discovery of the persons whom they celebrate." — *Scottish Historical and Romantic Ballads*, Vol. I., Edinburgh, 1808. The stanzas are certainly beautiful, and it is probable they may refer to some of the Dundonald family. The thrifty habits of one lady of that noble house, at least, have already been commemorated in some wretched stuff, still preserved by tradition in Paisley:

"My lady Dundonald sits singing and spinning,
Drawing a thread frae her tow rock;
And it weel sets me for to wear a gude cloak,
And I span ilka thread o't mysell, so I did.
Lilty teedle doodle doo, doodle doo,
Lilty teedle doodle doo dan. Lilty teedle," &c.

The reader has quite enough of this delectable ditty; the air, however, to which it is sung, is good and worthy of preservation.

O LADY Mary Ann looks o'er the castle wa',
She saw three bonnie boys playing at the ba',
The youngest he was the flower among them a';
My bonnie laddie 's young, but he 's growin' yet.

O father, O father, an ye think it fit,
We 'll send him a year to the college yet;
We 'll sew a green ribbon round about his hat,
And that will let them ken he 's to marry yet.

Lady Mary Ann was a flower in the dew,
Sweet was its smell, and bonnie was its hue,
And the langer it blossomed, the sweeter it grew;
For the lily in the bud will be bonnier yet.

Young Charlie Cochran was the sprout of an aik,
Bonnie, and blooming, and straight, was its make,
The sun took delight to shine for its sake;
And it will be the brag o' the forest yet.

The summer is gane when the leaves they were green,
And the days are awa' that we hae seen,
But far better days I trust will come again;
For my bonnie laddie 's young, but he 's growing yet.

## BABYLON,

### OR, THE BONNIE BANKS O' FORDIE.

This ballad is given from two copies obtained from recitation, which differ but little from each other. Indeed, the only variation is in the verse where the outlawed brother unweetingly slays his sister. One reading is, —

"He 's taken out his wee penknife,
Hey how bonnie;
And he 's twined her o' her ain sweet life,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie."

The other reading is that adopted in the text. This ballad is popular in the southern parishes of Perthshire: but where the scene is laid the editor has been unable to ascertain. Nor has any research of his enabled him to throw farther light on the history of its hero with the fantastic name, than what the ballad itself supplies.

---

There were three ladies lived in a bower,
Eh vow bonnie,
And they went out to pull a flower,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

They hadna pu'ed a flower but ane,
Eh vow bonnie,

When up started to them a banisht man,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

He 's ta'en the first sister by her hand,
Eh vow bonnie,
And he 's turned her round and made her stand,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

"It 's whether will ye be a rank robber's wife,
Eh vow bonnie,
Or will ye die by my wee penknife,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie?"

"It 's I 'll not be a rank robber's wife,
Eh vow bonnie,
But I 'll rather die by your wee penknife,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie."

He 's killed this may and he 's laid her by,
Eh vow bonnie,
For to bear the red rose company,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

He 's taken the second ane by the hand,
Eh vow bonnie,
And he 's turned her round and made her stand,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

"It 's whether will ye be a rank robber's wife,
Eh vow bonnie,
Or will ye die by my wee penknife,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie?"

"I 'll not be a rank robber's wife,
Eh vow bonnie,
But I 'll rather die by your wee penknife,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie."

He 's killed this may and he 's laid her by,
Eh vow bonnie,
For to bear the red rose company,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

He 's taken the youngest ane by the hand,
Eh vow bonnie,
And he 's turned her round and made her stand,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

Says, "Will ye be a rank robber's wife,
Eh vow bonnie,
Or will ye die by my wee penknife,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie?"

"I 'll not be a rank robber's wife,
Eh vow bonnie,

Nor will I die by your wee penknife,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

"For I hae a brother in this wood,
Eh vow bonnie,
And gin ye kill me, it 's he 'll kill thee,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie."

"What 's thy brother's name? come tell to me,
Eh vow bonnie."
"My brother's name is Baby Lon,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie."

"O sister, sister, what have I done,
Eh vow bonnie,
O have I done this ill to thee,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie?

"O since I 've done this evil deed,
Eh vow bonnie,
Good sall never be seen o' me,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie."

He 's taken out his wee penknife,
Eh vow bonnie,
And he 's twyned himsel o' his ain sweet life,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

## THE DÆMON LOVER.

"This ballad, which contains some verses of merit, was taken down from recitation by Mr. William Laidlaw, tenant in Traquair-knowe. It contains a legend, which, in various shapes, is current in Scotland. I remember to have heard a ballad in which a fiend is introduced paying his addresses to a beautiful maiden; but, disconcerted by the holy herbs which she wore in her bosom, makes the following lines the burden of his courtship:

'Gin ye wish to be leman mine,
Lay aside the St. John's wort and the vervain.'

The heroine of the following tale was unfortunately without any similar protection."—*Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.*

It would be unfair to imagine for a moment that the Editor of the meritorious work now quoted made any addition to this ballad, other than was furnished by his correspondent; but Mr. Laidlaw, it is suspected, may have improved upon its naked original,—for, with all our industry, we have not been able to find it in a more perfect state than this:

"'I have seven ships upon the sea,
Laden with the finest gold,
And mariners to wait us upon;—
All these you may behold.

"'And I have shoes for my love's feet,
Beaten of the purest gold,
And lined wi' the velvet soft,
To keep my love's feet from the cold.

"'O how do you love the ship,' he said,
'Or how do you love the sea?
And how do you love the bold mariners
That wait upon thee and me?'

"'O I do love the ship,' she said,
'And I do love the sea;
But woe be to the dim mariners,
That nowhere I can see.'

"They had not sailed a mile awa',
Never a mile but one,
When she began to weep and mourn,
And to think on her little wee son.

"'O hold your tongue, my dear,' he said,
'And let all your weeping abee,
For I 'll soon show to you how the lilies grow
On the banks of Italy.'

"They had not sailed a mile awa',
Never a mile but two,
Until she espied his cloven foot,
From his gay robes sticking thro'.

"They had not sailed a mile awa',
Never a mile but three,
When dark dark grew his eerie looks,
And raging grew the sea.

"They had not sailed a mile awa',
Never a mile but four,
When the little wee ship ran round about,
And never was seen more!"

The above is but a meagre skeleton of Mr. Laidlaw's edition, which, it will be observed, is embellished with divers "pleasant hills and dreary mountains of snow," not to be found in any chart of those days, but of whose bearings the Fiend pilot seems to have had a distinct knowledge, and even has the complacency to inform his fair voyager that they are the headlands of two very opposite regions, and that to the more uncomfortable of the two he is steering his course. Another circumstance in which they vary is in the remarkable progressive growth of the Demon, as they near the "dreary mountains"; in which particular he resembles that malevolent genius mentioned in an Arabian fiction, whom the wisdom of Solomon had one time sealed up in a jar and pitched into the sea, in whose depths he slumbered peaceably till some unfortunate wight had the ill luck to fish up the jar in which this bad spirit was condensed, and the temerity to break its potent seal. The copy given above likewise wants that melancholy concert of "wailing snow-white sprites" of the ocean, which ushers in the fifth act of this fearful tragedy; but both copies are agreed as to the manner in which the real character of the hero was discovered, namely, by the mal-formation of his feet. And happy it is that the arch-enemy, despite of his innumerable disguises and consummate cunning, can be thus easily unmasked, owing to the unalterable clumsiness of his lower extremities. The horns, with which vulgar super-

stition has also decorated his brow, it would appear, can be put off or on as he may have a mind; but the villanous hoof sticks to him at all times, and will neither be shaken off nor metamorphosed into any thing like the foot of a rational biped.

---

"O WHERE have you been, my long, long love,
This long seven years and mair?"
"O I 'm come to seek my former vows,
Ye granted me before."

"O hold your tongue of your former vows,
For they will breed sad strife;
O hold your tongue of your former vows,
For I am become a wife."

He turned him right and round about,
And the tear blinded his e'e:
"I wad never hae trodden on Irish ground,
If it had not been for thee.

"I might have had a king's daughter,
Far far beyond the sea;
I might have had a king's daughter,
Had it not been for love o' thee."

"If ye might have had a king's daughter,
Yer sell ye had to blame;

Ye might have taken the king's daughter,
For ye kend that I was nane."

"O faulse are the vows o' womankind,
But fair is their faulse bodie;
I never wad hae trodden on Irish ground,
Had it not been for love o' thee."

"If I was to leave my husband dear,
And my two babes also,
O what have you to take me to,
If with you I should go?"

"I have seven ships upon the sea,
The eighth brought me to land;
With four-and-twenty bold mariners,
And music on every hand."

She has taken up her two little babes,
Kissed them baith cheek and chin:
"O fare ye weel, my ain two babes,
For I 'll never see you again."

She set her foot upon the ship,
No mariners could she behold;
But the sails were o' the taffetie,
And the masts o' the beaten gold.

She had not sailed a league, a league,
A league, but barely three,
When dismal grew his countenance,
And drumlie grew his e'e.

The masts, that were like the beaten gold,
Bent not on the heaving seas;
But the sails, that were o' the taffetie,
Filled not in the eastland breeze.

They had not sailed a league, a league,
A league, but barely three,
Until she espied his cloven foot,
And she wept right bitterlie.

"O hold your tongue of your weeping," says he,
"Of your weeping now let me be;
I will show you how the lilies grow
On the banks of Italy."

"O what hills are yon, yon pleasant hills,
That the sun shines sweetly on?"
"O yon are the hills of heaven," he said,
"Where you will never win."

"O whaten a mountain is yon," she said,
"All so dreary wi' frost and snow?"

"O yon is the mountain of hell," he cried,
"Where you and I will go."

And aye when she turned her round about,
Aye taller he seemed for to be;
Until that the tops o' that gallant ship
Nae taller were than he.

The clouds grew dark and the wind grew loud,
And the levin filled her e'e;
And waesome wailed the snow-white sprites,
Upon the gurlie sea.

He strack the tapmast wi' his hand,
The foremast wi' his knee;
And he brake that gallant ship in twain,
And sank her in the sea.

## SYR CAULINE.

THIS ancient and beautiful romantick ballad is given from Percy's "Reliques," in which it was first published, from that folio MS. about whose existence the late Mr. Ritson was so skeptical. The editor candidly confesses that he was tempted to add several stanzas to the first part, and still more in the second, to connect and complete the story in the manner which appeared to him most interesting and affecting. How much it owes to the taste and genius of its editor we have not the means of ascertaining; but that his interpolations and additions have been very considerable, any one, acquainted with ancient minstrelsy, will have little room to doubt. We suspect, too, that the original ballad had a less melancholy catastrophe, and that the brave Syr Cauline, after his combat with the "hend Soldan," derived as much benefit from the leechcraft of fair Christabelle as he did after winning the Eldridge sword.

Between this ballad and some parts of the metrical romance of "Sir Tristrem" the late Mr. Finlay of Glasgow affects to discover a resemblance, but he has not condescended to trace a parallel between them. Indeed, we cannot help thinking, for all he says to the contrary, that his reasoning is no whit superior to Fluellin's, — "There is a river at Macedon, and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth": and according to Mr. Finlay, "there is an Irish king and his daughter in 'Syr Cauline'"; and there is

"also moreover an Irish king and his daughter in 'Sir Tristrem.'" The concealed love of Syr Cauline for one so much above his station will remind the reader of the gentle

"Squyer of lowe degrè
That loved the king's doughter of Hungre."

---

THE FIRST PART.

In Ireland, ferr over the sea,
There dwelleth a bonnye kinge;
And with him a yong and comlye knighte,
Men call him Syr Cauline.

The kinge had a ladye to his daughter,
In fashyon she hath no peere;
And princely wightes that ladye wooed
To be theyr wedded feere.*

Syr Cauline loveth her best of all,
But nothing durst he saye,
Ne descreeve his counsayl to no man,
But deerlye he lovde this may.†

Till on a daye it so beffell
Great dill‡ to him was dight§;

---

* *Feere*, mate, companion.
† *May*, maiden.
‡ *Dill*, grief.
§ *Dight*, wrought.

The mayden's love removde his mynd,
To care-bed went the knighte.

One while he spred his armes him fro,
One while he spred them nye:
"And aye! but I winne that ladye's love,
For dole now I mun* dye."

And whan our parish-masse was done,
Our kinge was bowne† to dyne:
He sayes, "Where is Syr Cauline,
That is wont to serve the wyne?"

Then aunswerde him a courteous knighte,
And fast his handes gan wringe:
"Syr Cauline is sicke, and like to dye,
Without a good leechinge.‡"

"Fetche me downe my daughter deere,
She is a leeche fulle fine;
Goe take him doughe and the baken bread,
And serve him with the wyne soe red:
Lothe I were him to tine.§"

Fair Christabelle to his chaumber goes,
Her maydens followyng nye:

---

* *Mun*, must.
† *Bowne*, made ready.
‡ *Leechinge*, medicinal cure.
§ *Tine*, lose.

"O well," she sayth, "how doth my lord?"
"O sicke, thou fayr ladye."

"Nowe ryse up wightlye, man, for shame,
Never lye soe cowardlee;
For it is told in my father's halle
You dye for love of mee."

"Fayre ladye, it is for your love
That all this dill I drye*:
For if you wold comfort me with a kisse,
Then were I brought from bale to blisse,
No lenger wold I lye."

"Syr knighte, my father is a kinge,
I am his onlye heire;
Alas! and well you knowe, syr knighte,
I never can be youre fere."

"O ladye, thou art a kinge's daughter,
And I am not thy peere;
But let me doe some deedes of armes,
To be your bacheleere."

"Some deedes of armes if thou wilt doe,
My bacheleere to bee

---

* *Drye*, suffer.

(But ever and aye my heart wold rue,
Giff harm shold happe to thee),

"Upon Eldridge hill there groweth a thorne,
Upon the mores brodinge *;
And dare ye, syr knighte, wake there all nighte,
Untill the fayre morninge?

"For the Eldridge knighte, so mickle of mighte,
Will examine you beforne;
And never man bare life awaye,
But he did him scath and scorne.

"That knighte he is a foul paynim,
And large of limb and bone;
And but if heaven may be thy speede,
Thy life it is but gone."

"Nowe on the Eldridge hilles Ile walke,
For thy sake, fair ladie;
And Ile either bring you a ready token,
Or Ile never more you see."

The lady is gone to her own chaumbere,
Her maydens following bright;

* *Mores brodinge*, wide downs, or moors? We are not satisfied with this explanation. *Brodinge*, we apprehend, refers to the thorn, and not to the moors; and is equivalent to spreading, or umbrageous.

Syr Cauline lope from care-bed soone,
And to the Eldridge hills is gone,
For to wake there all night.

Unto midnight, that the moone did rise,
He walked up and downe;
Then a lightsome bugle heard he blowe
Over the bents soe browne;
Quoth hee, "If cryance * come till my heart,
I am ffar from any good towne."

And soone he spyde on the mores so broad
A furyous wight and fell;
A ladye bright his brydle led,
Clad in a fayre kyrtell:

And soe fast he called on Syr Cauline,
"O man, I rede thee flye,
For 'but' if cryance come till thy heart,
I weene but thou mun dye."

He sayth, "'No' cryance comes till my heart,
Nor, in faith, I wyll not flee;
For, cause thou minged † not Christ before,
The less me dreadeth thee."

---

* *Cryance*, fear. † *Minged*, mentioned.

The Eldridge knighte, he pricked his steed;
Syr Cauline bold abode:
Then either shooke his trustye speare,
And the timber these two children bare
Soe soone in sunder slode.

Then tooke they out theyr two good swordes,
And layden on full faste,
Till helme and hawberke, mail and sheelde,
They all were well-nye brast.

The Eldridge knight was mickle of might,
And stiffe in stower * did stande;
But Syr Cauline with a "backward" stroke
He smote off his right-hand;
That soone he, with paine, and lacke of bloud,
Fell downe on that lay-land.

Then up Syr Cauline lift his brande
All over his head so hye:
"And here I sweare by the holy roode,
Nowe, caytiffe, thou shalt dye."

Then up and came that ladye brighte,
Faste wringing of her hande:

* *Stower*, battle, O. Fr. *Estour*.

"For the mayden's love, that most you love,
Withold that deadlye brande:

"For the mayden's love, that most you love,
Now smyte no more I praye;
And aye whatever thou wilt, my lord,
He shall thy hests obaye."

"Now sweare to mee, thou Eldridge knighte,
And here on this lay-land,
That thou wilt believe on Christ his laye,*
And therto plight thy hand:

"And that thou never on Eldridge come
To sporte, gamon, † or playe;
And that thou here give up thy armes
Until thy dying daye."

The Eldridge knighte gave up his armes,
With many a sorrowfulle sighe;
And sware to obey Syr Cauline's hest,
Till the tyme that he shold dye.

And he then up, and the Eldridge knighte
Sett him in his saddle anone;

---

* *Laye*, law. † *Gamon*, fight.

And the Eldridge knighte and his ladye,
To theyr castle are they gone.

Then he tooke up the bloudy hand,
That was so large of bone,
And on it he founde five ringes of gold,
Of knightes that had be slone.

Then he tooke up the Eldridge sworde,
As hard as any flint;
And he tooke off those ringes five,
As bright as fyre and brent.

Home then pricked Syr Cauline,
As light as leafe on tree;
I-wys he neither stint ne blanne,*
Till he his ladye see.

Then downe he knelt upon his knee,
Before that lady gay:
"O ladye, I have bin on the Eldridge hills;
These tokens I bring away."

"Now welcome, welcome, Syr Cauline,
Thrice welcome unto mee,

* *Blanne*, ceased.

For now I perceive thou art a true knighte,
Of valour bolde and free."

"O ladye, I am thy own true knighte,
Thy hests for to obaye;
And mought * I hope to winne thy love!" —
Ne more his tonge colde say.

The ladye blushed scarlette redde,
And fette † a gentill sighe:
"Alas! syr knight, how may this bee,
For my degree 's soe highe?

"But sith thou hast hight, thou comely youth,
To be my batchilere,
Ile promise, if thee I may not wedde,
I will have none other fere."

Then shee held forthe her lilly-white hand
Towards that knighte so free;
He gave to it one gentill kisse,
His heart was brought from bale to blisse,
The teares sterte from his ee.

"But keep my counsayl, Syr Cauline,
Ne let no man it knowe;

---

* *Mought*, might. † *Fette*, fetched, heaved.

For, and ever my father sholde it ken,
I wot he wolde us sloe."

From that daye forthe, that ladye fayre
Lovde Syr Cauline the knighte;
From that daye forthe, he only joyde
Whan shee was in his sight.

Yea, and oftentimes they mette
Within a fayre arboure,
Where they, in love and sweet daliaunce,
Past manye a pleasaunt houre.

---

## THE SECOND PART.

Everye white will have its blacke,
And everye sweete its sowre:
This founde the ladye Christabelle
In an untimely howre.

For so it befelle, as Syr Cauline
Was with that ladye faire,
The kinge, her father, walked forthe
To take the evenyng aire:

And into the arboure as he went
To rest his wearye feet,
He found his daughter and Syr Cauline
There sette in daliaunce sweet.

The kinge hee sterted forthe, i-wys,
And an angrye man was hee:
"Nowe, traytoure, thou shalt hange or drawe,
And rewe shall thy ladie."

Then forthe Syr Cauline he was ledde,
And throwne in dungeon deepe:
And the ladye into a towre so hye,
There left to wayle and weepe.

The queene she was Syr Cauline's friend,
And to the kinge sayd shee:
"I praye you save Syr Cauline's life,
And let him banisht bee."

"Now, dame, that traitor shall be sent
Across the salt sea fome:
But here I will make thee a band,
If ever he come within this land,
A foule deathe is his doome."

All woe-begone was that gentil knight
To parte from his ladye;

And many a time he sighed sore,
And cast a wistfulle eye:
"Faire Christabelle, from thee to parte,
Farre lever had I dye."

Faire Christabelle, that ladye bright,
Was had forthe of the towre;
But ever shee droopeth in her minde,
As nipt by an ungentle winde
Doth some faire lillye flowre.

And ever shee doth lament and weepe,
To tint her lover soe:
"Syr Cauline, thou little think'st on mee,
But I will still be true."

Manye a kinge, and manye a duke,
And lorde of high degree,
Did sue to that fayre ladye of love;
But never shee wolde them nee.*

When manye a daye was past and gone,
Ne comforte she colde finde,
The kynge proclaimed a tourneament,
To cheere his daughter's mind.

* *Nee*, nigh, come nigh.

And there came lords, and there came knights,
Fro manye a farre countrye,
To break a spere for theyr ladye's love,
Before that faire ladye.

And many a ladye there was sette,
In purple and in palle;
But faire Christabelle, soe woe-begone,
Was the fayrest of them all.

Then manye a knighte was mickle of might,
Before his ladye gaye;
But a stranger wight, whom no man knewe,
He wan the prize eche daye.

His acton it was all of blacke,
His hewberke and his sheelde;
Ne noe man wist whence he did come,
Ne noe man knewe where he did gone,
When they came from the feelde.*

* Syr Cauline here acts up to the genuine spirit of perfect chivalry. In old romances no incident is of more frequent occurrence than this, of knights already distinguished for feats of arms laying aside their wonted cognizances, and, under the semblance of stranger knights, manfully performing right worshipful and valiant deeds. How often is the renowned Arthur, in such exhibitions, obliged to exclaim, — "O Jhesu, what knyghte is that arrayed all in grene (or as the case may be), he justeth myghtely!" The emperor of Almaine, in like

And now three days were prestlye* past
In feates of chivalrye,
When lo, upon the fourth morninge,
A sorrowfulle sight they see:

A hugye giaunt stiffe and starke,
All foule of limbe and lere,
Two goggling eyen, like fire farden,
A mouthe from eare to eare.

Before him came a dwarffe full lowe,
That waited on his knee;

---

manner, after the timely succour afforded him by Syr Gowhter, is anxious to learn the name of his modest, but unknown, deliverer.

"Now dere God, said the Empor.
When com the knyght that is so styfe and stowre,
And al araide in rede,
Both hors, armour, and his steede?
A thowsand sarezyns he hath made blede
And beteen hem to dethe.
That heder is come to help me,
And yesterday in blak was he,
That stered hem in that stede.
And so he will er he goo hens
His dentis be hevy as lede."

In the romance of *Roswall and Lillian*, Dissawer resorts to the same devices as Syr Gowhter. In this incident, the one seems to be almost a literal transcript of the other.

* *Prestlye*, Bishop Percy says, means quickly, readily. Query, Was the glossarist not dreaming of the juggler's word, *presto*, at the time he gave this signification? If the word occurs so written in the folio MS. from which the ballad is taken, it is nothing else than a contraction for presentlye.

And at his backe five heads he bare,
All wan and pale of blee.*

"Sir," quoth the dwarffe, and louted lowe,
Behold that hend † Soldain!
Behold these heads I beare with me!
They are kings which he hath slain.

"The Eldridge knight is his own cousine,
Whom a knight of thine hath shent ‡;
And hee is come to avenge his wrong:
And to thee, all thy knightes among,
Defiance here hath sent.

"But yette he will appease his wrath,
Thy daughter's love to winne;
And, but thou yeelde him that fayre mayd,
Thy halls and towers must brenne §.

"Thy head, syr king, must goe with mee,
Or else thy daughter deere:
Or else within these lists soe broad,
Thou must finde him a peere."

The king he turned him round aboute,
And in his heart was woe:

---

* *Blee*, complexion.
† *Hend*, courteous.
‡ *Shent*, injured.
§ *Brenne*, burn.

" Is there never a knighte of my round table
This matter will undergoe?

" Is there never a knighte amongst yee all
Will fight for my daughter and mee?
Whoever will fight yon grimme Soldan,
Right fair his meede shall bee.

" For hee shall have my broad lay-lands,
And of my crowne be heyre;
And he shall winne fayre Christabelle
To be his wedded fere."

But every knighte of his round table
Did stand both still and pale;
For, whenever they lookt on the grim Soldan,
It made their hearts to quail.

All woe-begone was that fayre ladye,
When she sawe no helpe was nye:
She cast her thought on her owne true-love,
And the teares gusht from her eye.

Up then sterte the stranger knighte,
Sayd, " Ladye, be not affrayd;
Ile fight with thee with this grimme Soldan,
Thoughe he be unmacklye * made.

* *Unmacklye*, misshapen.

"And if thou wilt lend me the Eldridge sworde,
That lyeth within thy bowre,
I truste in Christe for to slay this fiende,
Thoughe he be stiff in stowre."

"Goe fetch him downe the Eldridge sworde,"
The kinge he cryde, "with speede:
Nowe, heaven assist thee, courteous knighte;
My daughter is thy meede."

The gyaunt he stepped into the lists,
And sayd, "Awaye, awaye!
I sweare, as I am the hend Soldan,
Thou lettest* me here all daye."

Then forthe the stranger knight he came,
In his blacke armoure dight:
The ladye sighed a gentle sighe,
"That this were my true knighte!"

And nowe the gyaunt and knighte be mett
Within the lists soe broad;
And now, with swordes soe sharpe of steele,
They gan to lay on load.†

The Soldan strucke the knighte a stroke
That made him reele asyde:

* *Lettest*, hinderest, detainest. † *Lay on load*, give blows.

Then woe-begone was that fayre ladye,
And thrice she deeply sighde.

The Soldan strucke a second stroke,
And made the bloude to flowe:
All pale and wan was that ladye fayre,
And thrice she wept for woe.

The Soldan strucke a third fell stroke,
Which brought the knighte on his knee:
Sad sorrow pierced that ladye's heart,
And she shriekt loud shriekings three.

The knighte he leapt upon his feete,
All recklesse of the pain:
Quoth hee, "But heaven be now my speede,
Or else I shall be slaine."

He grasped his sworde with mayne and mighte,
And, spying a secrette part,
He drave it into the Soldan's syde,
And pierced him to the heart.

Then all the people gave a shoute,
Whan they sawe the Soldan falle:
The ladye wept, and thanked Christ,
That had reskewed her from thrall.

And nowe the kinge, with all his barons,
Rose uppe from offe his seate,
And downe he stepped into the listes
That curteous knighte to greete.

But he, for payne and lacke of bloude,
Was fallen into a swounde,
And there, all walteringe in his gore,
Lay lifelesse on the grounde.

"Come downe, come downe, my daughter deare,
Thou art a leeche of skille;
Farre lever* had I lose halfe my landes
Than this good knighte sholde spille."

Downe then steppeth that fayre ladye,
To helpe him if she maye:
But when she did his beavere raise,
"It is my life, my lord!" she sayes,
And shriekte and swound awaye.

Sir Cauline juste lifte up his eyes,
When he heard his ladye crye:
"O ladye, I am thine owne true love;
For thee I wisht to dye."

---

* *Lever*, rather; the comparative of *lief*.

Then giving her one partinge looke,
He closed his eyes in death,
Ere Christabelle, that ladye milde,
Begane to drawe her breathe.

But when she found her comelye knighte
Indeed was dead and gone,
She layde her pale, cold cheeke to his,
And thus she made her moane:

"O staye, my deare and onlye lord,
For mee, thy faithfulle feere;
'T is meet that I shold followe thee,
Who hast bought my love soe deare."

Then fayntinge in a deadlye swoune,
And with a deepe-fette sighe,
That burst her gentle hearte in twayne,
Fayre Christabelle did dye.

## THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL.

This fragment is given from the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border."

THERE lived a wife at Usher's well,
And a wealthy wife was she:
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
And sent them o'er the sea.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely ane,
When word came to the carline wife,
That her three sons were gane.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely three,
When word came to the carline wife,
That her sons she 'd never see.

"I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fishes in the flood,

Till my three sons come hame to me,
In earthly flesh and blood ! "

It fell about the Martinmas,
When nights are lang and mirk,
The carline wife's three sons came hame,
And their hats were o' the birk.

It neither grew in syke nor ditch,
Nor yet in any sheugh ;
But at the gates o' Paradise
That birk grew fair eneugh.

. . . . .

" Blow up the fire, my maidens,
Bring water from the well,
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well."

And she has made to them a bed,
She 's made it large and wide :
And she 's ta'en her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bed-side.

. . . . .

Up then crew the red red cock,
And up and crew the gray ;

The eldest to the youngest said,
" 'T is time we were away."

The cock he hadna craw'd but once,
And clapp'd his wings at a',
Whan the youngest to the eldest said,
" Brother, we must awa'.

" The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
The channerin' * worm doth chide ;
Gin we be mist out o' our place,
A sair pain we maun bide.

" Fare ye weel, my mother dear !
Fareweel to barn and byre !
And fare ye weel, the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire ! "

. . . . .

---

* *Channerin'*, fretting.

## SIR ROLAND.

This fragment, we believe, has never before been printed. It was communicated to us by an ingenious friend, who remembered having heard it sung in his youth. A good many verses at the beginning, some about the middle, and one or two at the end, seem to be wanting. More sanguine antiquaries than we are might, from the similarity of names, imagine they had, in this ballad, discovered the original romance whence Shakspeare had given this line:

> "Child Rowland to the dark tower came."
>
> *King Lear*, Act III.

The story is of a very gloomy and superstitious texture. A young lady, on the eve of her marriage, invited her lover to a banquet, where she murders him in revenge for some real or fancied neglect. Alarmed for her own safety, she betakes herself to flight; and in the course of her journey she sees a stranger knight riding slowly before her, whom she at first seeks to shun, by pursuing an opposite direction; but, on finding, that, wheresoever she turned, he still appeared between her and the moonlight, she resolves to overtake him. This, however, she finds in vain, till, of his own accord, he stays for her at the brink of a broad river. They agree to cross it; and, when in the mid stream, she implores his help to save her from drowning. To her

horror, she finds her fellow-traveller to be no other than the gaunt apparition of her dead lover.

---

. . . . .

WHAN he cam to his ain luve's bouir,
He tirl'd at the pin,
And sae ready was his fair fause luve
To rise and let him in.

"O welcome, welcome, Sir Roland," she says,
"Thrice welcome thou art to me;
For this night thou wilt feast in my secret bouir,
And to-morrow we 'll wedded be."

"This night is hallow-eve," he said,
"And to-morrow is hallow-day;
And I dreamed a drearie dream yestreen,
That has made my heart fu' wae.

"I dreamed a drearie dream yestreen,
And I wish it may cum to gude:
I dreamed that ye slew my best grew hound,
And gied me his lappered blude."

. . . . .

"Unbuckle your belt, Sir Roland," she said,
"And set you safely down."

"O your chamber is very dark, fair maid,
And the night is wondrous lown."

"Yes, dark, dark is my secret bowir,
And lown the midnight may be;
For there is none waking in a' this tower,
But thou, my true love, and me."

. . . . .

She has mounted on her true love's steed,
By the ae light o' the moon;
She has whipped him and spurred him,
And roundly she rade frae the toun.

She hadna ridden a mile o' gate,
Never a mile but ane,
Whan she was aware of a tall young man,
Slow riding o'er the plain.

She turned her to the right about,
Then to the left turn'd she;
But aye, 'tween her and the wan moonlight,
That tall knight did she see.

And he was riding burd alane,
On a horse as black as jet;
But tho' she followed him fast and fell,
No nearer could she get.

"O stop! O stop! young man," she said,
"For I in dule am dight;
O stop, and win a fair lady's luve,
If you be a leal true knight."

But nothing did the tall knight say,
And nothing did he blin;
Still slowly rode he on before,
And fast she rade behind.

She whipped her steed, she spurred her steed,
Till his breast was all a foam;
But nearer unto that tall young knight,
By Our Ladye, she could not come.

"O if you be a gay young knight,
As well I trow you be,
Pull tight your bridle reins, and stay
Till I come up to thee."

But nothing did that tall knight say,
And no whit did he blin,
Until he reached a broad river's side,
And there he drew his rein.

"O is this water deep," he said,
"As it is wondrous dun?

Or it is sic as a saikless maid
And a leal true knight may swim ? "

" The water it is deep," she said,
" As it is wondrous dun ;
But it is sic as a saikless maid
And a leal true knight may swim."

The knight spurred on his tall black steed,
The lady spurred on her brown ;
And fast they rade unto the flood,
And fast they baith swam down.

" The water weets my tae," she said,
" The water weets my knee ;
And hold up my bridle reins, sir knight,
For the sake of Our Ladye."

" If I would help thee now," he said,
" It were a deadly sin ;
For I 've sworn neir to trust a fair may's word,
Till the water weets her chin."

" O the water weets my waist," she said,
" Sae does it weet my skin ;
And my aching heart rins round about,
The burn maks sic a din.

"The water is waxing deeper still,
Sae does it wax mair wide;
And aye the farther that we ride on,
Farther off is the other side.

"O help me now, thou false false knight,
Have pity on my youth;
For now the water jawes owre my head,
And it gurgles in my mouth."

The knight turned right and round about,
All in the middle stream,
And he stretched out his head to that lady,
But loudly she did scream.

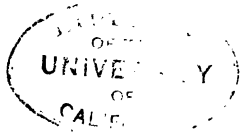
"O this is hallow-morn," he said,
"And it is your bridal day;
But sad would be that gay wedding,
If bridegroom and bride were away.

"And ride on, ride on, proud Margaret!
Till the water comes o'er your bree;
For the bride maun ride deep, and deeper yet,
Wha rides this ford wi' me.

"Turn round, turn round, proud Margaret!
Turn ye round, and look on me;

Thou hast killed a true knight under trust,
And his ghost now links on with thee."

. . . . .

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